

Article BY ERIC NORDEN

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THE MULTILITH LETTER, bordered in black and headed "In Memoriam," was addressed to a small group of liberal Congressmen who had voted to deny appropriations to the House Committee on Un-American Activities for the fiscal year 1964-1965. It was one of thousands run off by superpatriots accusing HUAC's foes of aiding and abetting "the international Communist conspiracy"; but few of the letter's recipients were inclined to dismiss it as the work of a commonplace political crank. The warning was issued by the Minutemen of America, an underground paramilitary organization of right-wing extremists heavily armed and itching for action: One Congressman on the Minutemen hate list, Representative Henry Gonzalez of Texas, took the threat seriously enough to urge then-Attorney General Robert

F. Kennedy to launch a Justice Department investigation of the Minutemen. In the light of recent developments, he wrote, "I have become decidedly more sensitive about some of the hate material that is so widely distributed." By recent developments, Gonzalez alluded to a newsmen, he meant the assassination of President Kennedy. A week later, Gonzalez formally urged the Warren Commission, then initiating its probe into the President's death, to investigate the possibility of Minutemen involvement in the assassination. Attorney General Kennedy replied that he could find no proof the Minutemen had violated any Federal laws, and there was, consequently, no action the Department of Justice could take, "unless there is sufficient evidence to establish that these acts are beyond the protected areas of speech, press and assembly guarantees of the First Amendment to the Constitution." Kennedy's position failed to mollify Minuteman "maximum" leader Robert Bolivar DePugh, who charged that the Attorney General had, in fact, been covertly harassing the organization since 1961. "If Robert Kennedy can't find anything that we've done illegal," said DePugh, "it certainly is not because he hasn't tried." DePugh subsequently called Kennedy "the most dangerous traitor in American public life."

Despite their early public image as gun-happy but relatively harmless kooks—"the first World War Three buffs," as one observer dubbed them—the Minutemen in recent years have evinced a tendency to translate their threats into action. Senator J.



THE PARAMILITARY RIGHT

those paranoid patriots
—the minutemen—plot
to save america by

assassinating the
liberal traitors
of the government



William Fulbright, the *bête noire* of the ultraright ever since his exposure of General Edwin A. Walker's indoctrination of his troops with Birchite propaganda in 1961, has received hundreds of threats from Minutemen and their supporters. In 1962, one fanatic Minuteman put aside his pen and reached for his rifle. The plot to assassinate Fulbright was the brain child of "John Morris," the *nom de guerre* of a Dallas Minuteman activist and former recruiter for George Lincoln Rockwell's American Nazi Party, who was convinced that the systematic liquidation of leading liberals could "purify" the country, terrorize the opposition and enable the paramilitary right to "gain control of the Government." Morris persuaded a number of fellow Minutemen in Kansas City that Fulbright would make an ideal first victim. A former aide to DePugh, Jerry Milton Brooks—nicknamed "the Rabbi" because of his virulent anti-Semitism—claims that "Morris' plan was to knock off Fulbright during one of his speaking tours in Arkansas. One Kansas City Minuteman put up the money for Morris and another loaned him a 1952 Buick to get to Little Rock. A Texas man was supposed to hire a private plane and fly him out of the state after Fulbright was zapped."

According to Brooks, "Morris purchased a rifle with a telescopic sight; but on the day he was to depart for Little Rock, news of the plot leaked to DePugh, who blew his top. At this stage, he was still preaching his principle of deliberate delay, which means all the emphasis is on recruiting and propaganda and stockpiling arms, so you don't zap anybody till the outfit's ready to function fully underground. DePugh met Morris on a bridge in Lexington, Missouri, and told him he had to call off the plan because, whether it succeeded or failed, all that would happen was that the authorities would be sicked onto the Minutemen. DePugh made it clear that if Morris went ahead, he'd be the one who'd end up six feet under. The poor guy panicked and beat it out to Oklahoma."

DePugh has since denied that there was ever a serious plan to take Fulbright's life, but admits having "talked" with Morris. "The whole thing was blown up out of all proportion," he asserts, adding: "But just because I've exercised a restraining influence in the past, that doesn't mean I'll always do so. There is no act too brutal or illegal for us to take if it will help save this country from communism—including assassination. There'll be a lot of dead s.o.b.s before this fight is over."

Minuteman wrath is not restricted to "subversive" Senators. In the fall of 1966, three Dallas Minutemen, led by a night-club owner who served as a local official of the organization's political arm, the Patriotic Party, hatched a plot

to assassinate Stanley Marcus, millionaire owner of the Neiman-Marcus department store and one of the city's few outspoken liberals. An informer present at the planning sessions told journalist William W. Turner, an ex-FBI agent, that snipers intended to ambush Marcus on one of his out-of-town trips, since "another assassination in Dallas would be too much." Once more, however, DePugh got wind of the plot and aborted it at the last moment.

A more grandiose and imaginative Minuteman effort was the attempt to introduce cyanide gas into the air-conditioning system of the United Nations Building during a General Assembly session. Minuteman defector Brooks claims that the plan was initially approved by DePugh, who then developed cold feet and backed out. "He got the idea at our training session in Independence, Missouri, in the summer of 1965," says Brooks. "A bunch of us were sitting around in a bull session and somebody wondered how you could wipe out everybody in the UN all at once, and one of the guys suggested mortars, but I said, 'No, even with a direct hit, you'd only zap a few, despite those glass walls.' And then Bob [DePugh] says to me, 'Do you think you could get hold of any cyanide?' He asked me because I was working for an extermination outfit at the time, and I said, 'Sure, as much as you want.' So he told me to get him some, and I bought twenty gallons and took it back to headquarters. Some of it went out to Ken Goff [the Reverend Kenneth Goff, leader of an affiliated paramilitary organization, the Soldiers of the Cross] and Bob said we'd keep the rest for the UN. He told me he'd select one of our New York guys to put it into the air-conditioning ducts, and I found out later they'd picked a member who's with the New York state police and who could use his credentials to get into the UN basement. But then Bob decided he wanted to wait, and some of the guys who'd gotten all excited about the idea were really pissed off and decided to go ahead on their own."

This activist faction, chafing at DePugh's "moderation," secreted the cyanide and prepared to act independently, in defiance of DePugh's instructions. According to political historian George Thayer, who scrutinized the Minutemen closely in his book *The Farther Shores of Politics*: "DePugh loyalists were outraged at this development and made plans to shoot the faction's leader in a room lined with butcher paper. To obliterate any trace of the crime, the bloody paper was to be burned, the body buried in a deep grave somewhere in Missouri and the gun smelted down. Both the plot and counterplot fell apart when the authorities got wind of them and stepped into the picture."

Brooks, who blew the whistle on the

cyanide plot in Kansas City's U. S. District Court during DePugh's trial for violation of the National Firearms Act—and who is now hiding out in the Alaskan tundra to escape his former comrades' retribution—believes that the Minutemen are biding their time for a fresh attack on the UN, with or without cyanide gas. "That place is a symbol of everything they hate," he explained to a journalist. "They're bound to take another crack at it someday."

Real or imagined Communists—in and out of the UN—have been a favorite target of Minuteman terrorist attacks in recent years. In the predawn hours of October 30, 1966, 19 heavily armed Minutemen, divided into three bands, were intercepted by staked-out police (tipped by an FBI informant) as they zeroed in on left-wing camps in a three-state area. Targets of the coordinated forays were Camp Webatuck at Wingdale, New York, where fire bombs with detonators had already been set in place; Camp Midvale in New Jersey; and a pacifist community at Voluntown, Connecticut, established by the New England Committee for Nonviolent Action. According to Queens district attorney Nat Hentel, who helped coordinate the roundup, the Minutemen, disguised as hunters, intended to burn the camps to the ground—along with their inhabitants. A state police official added, "I don't know what they thought they were going to accomplish, but they had plenty of hardware available to get the job done."

As the Minutemen were being herded into custody, raids on secret munitions bunkers and basement arms caches by 110 state, county and city police officers netted a huge arsenal of Minuteman combat matériel: 1,000,000 rounds of rifle and small-arms ammunition, chemicals for preparing bomb detonators, considerable radio equipment—including 30 walkie-talkies and shortwave sets tuned to police bands—125 single-shot and automatic rifles, 10 dynamite bombs, 5 mortars, 12 .30-caliber machine guns, 25 pistols, 240 knives (hunting, throwing, cleaver and machete), 1 bazooka, 3 grenade launchers, 6 hand grenades and 50 80-millimeter mortar shells. For good measure, there was even a crossbow replete with curare-tipped arrows.

Arrested in the roundup was the man District Attorney Hentel identified as the East Coast coordinator of the Minutemen: Milton Kellogg, a wealthy Upstate businessman. Police announced that in raids on Kellogg's two homes, in Syracuse and Brewerton, they had confiscated—along with 11 hypodermic needles, 6 syringes, 4 handguns, 4 rifles, 2 shotguns, gunpowder and 5000 rounds of ammunition—files disclosing that the extent of Minutemen activities in the New York/New England area was far greater than local authorities had hitherto suspected,

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and that the paramilitary activists had even succeeded in infiltrating the state police. Hentel announced in the aftermath of the raids that for two years, an unnamed state policeman—one of three state troopers comprising a Minuteman "action squad"—had looted heavy weapons from armories for the organization and had tipped off Minuteman leaders on pending state and Federal investigations. According to Hentel, the trooper had also served as an organizer for the Minutemen and had recruited National Guardsmen as possible leaders of Minutemen cells. The three state policemen were subsequently cashiered, but no criminal action was taken against them.

The Minutemen arrested in the raids were drawn from a cross section of lower-middle-class America; in addition to the state troopers, there were a cabdriver, a gardener, a subway conductor, a fireman, a mechanic, a plasterer, a truck driver, a heavy-equipment operator, a draftsman, several small businessmen, a horse groom and two milkmen. Most were respectable family men in their late 20s or early 30s, known to their neighbors as solid, church-going pillars of the community—but they inhabited a world far removed from the P. T. A. and the Rotary Club. One of the milkmen, nicknamed "Nathan Hale" because of the inscription LIBERTY OR DEATH on the stock of one of his semiautomatic rifles, carefully stored highly volatile plastic bombs in the refrigerator. One of the leaders of the group, Jack Lynn Boyce of Katonah, New York, a former Madison Avenue copywriter and more recently a sophomore at Danbury State College in Connecticut, stockpiled his own private arsenal; in a six-A.M. raid on his home, police seized an undetermined number of bazookas, 10 machine guns, 3 mortars, several handguns, an antitank missile launcher, 12 walkie-talkie sets, a sawed-off shotgun, automatic rifles and a large quantity of ammunition. Outside Boyce's spacious two-story farmhouse, a Betsy Ross flag with 13 stars fluttered proudly in the breeze, and his porch door was flanked by two upright howitzers. Buried in the back of a hill behind his house was the neighborhood's only fallout shelter; Boyce was a regional Civil Defense officer. In his spare time, he sharpened his marksmanship by lobbing cans of peas from a modified mortar at cows grazing in a nearby pasture, while his brother, equipped with a walkie-talkie, served as forward artillery observer. Bemused neighbors recorded no direct hits. Another of the band, a Long Island gardener, held recruiting sessions for the Ku Klux Klan in his greenhouse; and one of the most dedicated members, a Reserve master sergeant in the Green Berets, taught unseasoned

recruits the rudiments of jungle warfare in his back yard.

Despite appearances, this group was viewed by New York authorities as anything but ludicrous. "Kooks they are, harmless they're not," said one officer of the Bureau of Special Services, the undercover intelligence unit of the New York City police force. "It's only due to their own incompetence, and not any lack of motivation, that they haven't left a trail of corpses in their wake."

In the aftermath of the roundup, a high New York City official revealed to *The Washington Post* that if the orchestrated raids on the leftist camps had proved successful, the Minutemen's next move was to have been an assassination attempt on former CORE leader James Farmer, marked for death as a "top black Red." Hentel adds that during the raids, hundreds of copies of a forged pamphlet, purportedly issued by a black nationalist group, were discovered in the Bellmore, Long Island, home of Minuteman leader William Garrett. The leaflets—which Hentel characterized as part of a plot to foment racial violence—had been thrown from speeding cars in racially tense areas of Queens and Long Island, urging Negroes "to kill white devils and have the white women for our pleasure." Hentel feels that a racial conflict was only narrowly averted through the cooperation of local newspapers and radio stations, which clamped a news blackout on the incident. William H. Booth, chairman of the New York City Commission on Human Rights, contends that there was a "tie-in" between the Minutemen and rumored attacks on whites by Negroes that led to racial disturbances in the East New York, Bushwick, Lafayette, Bensonhurst-Gravesend and South Ozone Park areas of the city in 1966.

The raids put a temporary crimp in Minuteman plans, but they failed to break the back of the organization, even in the New York/New England area. In June 1967, five New York City Minutemen organized an assassination attempt against Herbert Aptheker, director of the American Institute of Marxist Studies and a member of the national committee of the U.S. Communist Party, whose Brooklyn campaign headquarters had already been the target of an abortive Minuteman fire-bombing. The conspirators this time planted a homemade pipe bomb on the roof of the Allerton Community and Social Center in the Bronx, directly above an upstairs room where Aptheker was scheduled to address an audience on Marxist dialectics. Due to a defective timing mechanism, the bomb exploded after the meeting, shattering a skylight above the speaker's stand and causing considerable damage to the empty auditorium. The Minutemen plot-

ters were swiftly apprehended and their leader was sentenced to two years in prison; his four codefendants—one of them the owner of a Bronx sporting-goods shop—were let off with lighter sentences.

The six Minutemen who launched a second attack on the pacifist encampment at Voluntown late last summer fared no better. Once again, FBI infiltrators in their ranks had tipped off local authorities—but this time the warning almost came too late. State troopers, alerted by Federal agents to the impending raid, had stationed themselves in force at the entrance to the 40-acre farm two miles north on Route 165, but the Minutemen slipped through the cordon and surprised two women residents of the camp outside the main farmhouse. (None of the pacifists had been apprised by police of their danger.) According to one of the women, the six masked Minutemen, dressed in combat fatigues and carrying rifles with fixed bayonets, "spoke quietly, moved quietly and seemed very self-assured." The Minutemen shoved the women inside the farmhouse, bound them securely and taped their eyes and mouths, before setting forth to ransack the ground floor.

The scenario was abruptly interrupted by the belated arrival of the state troopers. The Minutemen opened fire and a brief gun battle ensued before they threw down their weapons and surrendered. Six people were shot in the melee—one state trooper, four raiders and one of the women residents, who was wounded in the hip when a trooper's shotgun discharged as he side-stepped a Minuteman's bayonet thrust. The six men were charged with conspiracy to commit arson and assault with intent to kill. One of them was identified as chairman of his home town's Wallace for President organization; another served as cochairman of the Wallace campaign in Norwich, Connecticut.

Minuteman chief DePugh invariably denies responsibility for such terrorist raids and claims they are carried out by local leaders without his approval. But in recent years, DePugh has encountered his own share of difficulties with the law. He was sentenced to four years' imprisonment for violations between May 1963 and August 1966 of the National Firearms Act, which makes it illegal to possess unregistered automatic weapons; he is appealing the conviction. And on March 4, 1968, a Federal Grand Jury in Seattle indicted DePugh and his chief aide, Walter Patrick Peyson, on charges of masterminding a conspiracy to dynamite the police and power stations in Redmond, Washington, as a diversionary tactic preparatory to robbing the town's three banks—all part of a bizarre plan to swell Minuteman coffers in the tradition of the early Bolshevik terrorists. Redmond's

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chief of police reports that the FBI knew of the conspiracy in advance.

Most such Minuteman plots have so far been aborted—or so it seems. As one Minuteman activist in Pennsylvania told a newsman: "Sure, some of the guys get caught. That's all in the game. But there are a lot of bombings—and murders—in this country that never get solved; and after the first day, you never read anything about it in the papers. We're not happy about all these convictions, but it's still just the visible tip of the iceberg."

In response to the burgeoning of Minuteman violence—reported and unreported—the legislatures of New York and California, two states that rank high in Minuteman activity, have already passed legislation outlawing all paramilitary organizations. The New York ban was adopted unanimously in late 1967, after New York Attorney General Louis J. Lefkowitz initiated an intensive inquiry into Minuteman activities in the state at the request of Governor Rockefeller. In his report to the governor, which galvanized the legislature into action, Lefkowitz charged that his office's ten-month probe had disclosed "shocking evidence of violence and potential guerrilla warfare" by Minutemen activists in 33 counties; for one thing, Minutemen had told state investigators they would not hesitate to assassinate such "Communist sympathizers" as Earl Warren, Hubert Humphrey and Nelson Rockefeller. Lefkowitz warned that the Minutemen were "training, reading, thinking and living guns, bombs and violence . . . actively preparing for a private war." New York State Minutemen were not dismayed at being outlawed. "This won't stop us," one Long Island Minuteman assured a reporter. "We've always been underground; we'll just burrow a little deeper now."

California proscribed the organization in the spring of 1965, after an 81-page investigative report by Attorney General Thomas C. Lynch characterized the Minutemen as a group "led by men who have publicly stated: 'When our constitutional Government is threatened, we are morally justified in resorting to violence to discourage Communists and their fellow travelers.' Notice is thus served that the decision rests with the Minuteman leadership as to what constitutes a threat to our Government and what action the Minutemen will take to counter such a threat. That presents the fantastic situation of a private citizen raising a private military force to accomplish by violence whatever objective the citizen decides in his judgment is best for the country. Such a military force is improperly labeled guerrilla; the more precise term is insurgent."

Other states, alarmed by increasing political violence, have also initiated investigations of paramilitary organizations,

and a number of Congressmen have strongly urged a Federal probe of the Minutemen and affiliated groups. Such legislators have not escaped the wrath—so far only verbal—of the paramilitarists. New Jersey Representative Charles Joelsson reports that after he urged a probe of Minuteman activities, he was deluged by thousands of letters accusing him not only of bad judgment and ignorance but of insanity and treason. From Cincinnati came one billet-doux indicting Joelsson for being "against Christian groups fighting black African Communist control of the United States." And an anonymous letter from Colorado told him simply: "We'll get you, Laddy Boy."

Perhaps because of, rather than despite such threats, Congressional pressure for a Federal crackdown on the Minutemen has continued, with some effect. The FBI and the Treasury Department have stepped up their efforts to infiltrate the group and nip its lethal plots. Local, city and state police, who initially treated the Minutemen as a bad joke, have also grown increasingly concerned—as demonstrated by the spiraling arrest rate of Minutemen for terrorist attacks and for illegal possession of weapons. The latter charge constitutes the Minutemen's Achilles' heel. Wally Peyson, an ex-Marine, was convicted of illegal possession of an automatic weapon in 1966; and Rich Lauchli, Jr., a founding member of the Minutemen, served a term in a Federal penitentiary for attempting to sell guns and mortars to Federal investigators posing as representatives of a Latin-American government, and then—within two months of his parole last February—was arrested in southern Illinois with a cache of more than 1000 Thompson submachine guns. A host of lesser Minutemen have also fallen victim to the Federal Firearms Act.

But despite the surveillance of Federal, state and local police, the Minutemen's organizational effectiveness has not been appreciably impaired. Agents and informants of the FBI and the Treasury Department have succeeded in penetrating many Minutemen cadres, but the organization is structured according to the Communist Party's "cell" system. Members of one unit do not know the identity of any other Minutemen, even though they might live halfway down the block; hydralike, the group is thus able to survive the lopping off of one or more local units. Minutemen are also exhaustively trained in the techniques of clandestine intelligence and security. According to the California attorney general's report, "The Minuteman organization is designed to function as a secret underground network, and its routine operations in these times of peace are conducted along the lines of a training program

for the hostilities to come. Each member is assigned a number that becomes his identification in all communications; he is warned about the use of the telephone in contacting headquarters; he is advised in the use of mail drops; he is warned to use two envelopes in organization correspondence and to place an opaque material between the inner and outer envelopes, to prevent the letter from being read by means of infrared cameras; and he is instructed to employ a wide variety of stratagems and devices as security measures." Secrecy, for the Minuteman, is a way of life—to such an extent that even the national leadership does not know the membership figures.

"I don't even know the members' names," says DePugh. "All we ask is the name and address of a unit leader—and this can be a pseudonym. I have no way of knowing exactly how many members we have, except that each group is supposed to have a minimum of five and a maximum of fifteen. So I strike an average of eight." DePugh's most recent estimate: 25,000 "hard-core" members, fully trained and armed, plus approximately 65,000 supporters and recruits undergoing instruction and indoctrination. "Only a relatively small percentage of these will ever become 'secure' members and be incorporated into the unit chain of command," DePugh explains. "We make a real effort to weed out all the weak links in advance; we're looking for quality, not quantity; one man ready to give his life is worth fifty who'll crack when the heat is on. That's why I reject three out of every four membership applications at the very outset." Other estimates range from an improbable low of 500 (from J. Edgar Hoover, who derides the group as a "paper organization," despite the attention it receives from his agents) to an equally improbable high of 100,000 (by a fervent Minuteman in Kansas City). Most law-enforcement officials and informed journalists believe the organization has between 5000 and 10,000 members and 30,000 to 40,000 supporters, but the "activist" percentage remains in doubt.

Whatever their actual number, there is no doubt that the Minutemen have become a potent force on the ultraright. And there is no doubt that the founder and national coordinator has traveled a long way since the bucolic days when he peddled veterinary medicines to Midwest farmers. Robert Bolivar DePugh was born 45 years ago in Independence, Missouri, where his father served until recently as a deputy sheriff. (The elder DePugh, now in his 70s, is a fervent supporter of his son's political activities and a charter member of the Minutemen.) Son Robert attended the University of Missouri for three semesters and then enlisted in the Army in 1942, serving as a radar operator in the Signal Corps until he was discharged in 1944 on the recommendation of a panel of medical

examiners, who diagnosed him as suffering from a "psychoneurosis, mixed type, severe, manifested by anxiety and depressive features and schizoid personality."

It was during his stint in the Service that DePugh's interest in politics was first sparked, as the result of his encounter with a number of radar scientists at the coast-artillery installation at Fort Monroe, Virginia, who "seemed not to hold allegiance to the same flag I did. I was really quite naïve politically in those days," he recalls. "I knew there was an unbridgeable gulf between our positions, but I didn't suspect they were Communists or at the very least Communist-oriented, as I can now see in retrospect was the case. It was just a kind of visceral reaction; I knew in my guts that these people weren't loyal Americans."

After leaving the Service, DePugh returned to college, attending Kansas State, the University of Colorado and Topeka's Washburn University—all in rapid succession. He was a bright student but had a quicksilver attention span and didn't stay at any one school long enough to earn a degree. He was particularly interested in chemistry and genetics, however, and during his days at Kansas State organized "The Society for the Advancement of Canine Genetics," which at its dissolution several years later had 2000 dog-breeding members across the country and was affiliated with the International Genetics Society.

In 1954, DePugh founded the Biolab Corporation in Independence, a pharmaceutical supply house specializing in vitamin supplements for dog-food products; it founded in 1955, after "differences of opinion" among the stockholders, and DePugh worked for a dog-food company until 1959, when he revitalized Biolab in partnership with his brother Bill and moved company headquarters to its present site in Norborne, Missouri. Within a year, Biolab was a thriving venture, producing dozens of veterinary-medicine products and worth over \$250,000. At 35, DePugh was Norborne's leading citizen and a prototype small-town-America success story. With a prosperous business, a devoted wife and six handsome children, he appeared to have everything he wanted. But DePugh was restless and dissatisfied.

"Until the late Fifties," he remembers, "I was so preoccupied with getting an education and earning a living that I didn't have any opportunity to think seriously about politics and foreign affairs. It was only after Biolab became a success and I found myself with some leisure time on my hands that I began to really think about the way the world was heading—and I didn't like what I saw. I began to study anti-Communist literature and, suddenly, I grasped the phenomenal success of the international Communist conspiracy. Within 50 years after the Russian Revolution, it con-

trolled one third of the earth's land surface and population. I realized that if this kept up, my children—or at the most optimistic estimate, my grandchildren—would be living under the Marxist boot. I decided that it was my duty to do something about it, and stop sitting back on my butt preoccupied with how much more money I was going to make this year over last."

DePugh and a small circle of like-minded friends began discussing the sorry state of the world at weekly political seminars, and all soon joined the John Birch Society. But by the beginning of 1960 disillusionment had set in and they came to the reluctant conclusion that the Birchers were "all talk and no action" and could never be politically effective. The idea of the Minutemen first came to DePugh during a duck-hunting expedition on the shore of an isolated Missouri lake with nine of his right-wing friends in June 1960, at the height of the U-2 crisis. As they crouched in a muddy duckblind, one of the party expressed apprehension over the international situation and another jokingly reassured him, "Well, if the Russians invade us, we can always come up here and fight on as a guerrilla band." There's no record of DePugh's crying Eureka!, but he began discussing the idea seriously, and ducks were soon forgotten. "We got to talking about how bad off the country would be in case of invasion," he recalls, "and how a group such as ours could become a guerrilla band. We were just talking at first, kicking it around. But somehow the idea caught on."

One of the sportsmen, a veteran of the U. S. Army Special Forces, dusted off his instruction manuals and the group began conducting twice-weekly seminars in guerrilla warfare, with each member assigned a particular field of political study and instructed to prepare a position paper on its relationship to the establishment of an "extralegal" paramilitary opposition to the awaited leftist take-over of the nation. After several months of study and research, DePugh synthesized the results into the first Minuteman manifesto, which postulated eight key conclusions in terms oddly evocative of the current revolutionary jargon of the ultraleft:

1. Our diplomatic war against communism has already been lost by bunglers or traitors within our own Government.
2. This diplomatic war has been and continues to be lost by appointed Government officials beyond the reach of public opinion.
3. We cannot win a diplomatic war against communism abroad until we first establish a genuinely pro-American Government at home.
4. A pro-American Government can no longer be established by normal political means.

5. The minority-vote blocs, controlled labor unions and corrupt political machines, so completely monopolize the American political scene that there is no chance for the average American citizen to regain control of his destiny at the ballot box.
6. Any further effort, time or money spent in trying to save our country by political means would be wasted.
7. The leaders of most other conservative organizations privately agree that it is politically impossible to elect a conservative Government.
8. We conclude that the American people are moving inexorably toward a time of total control and frustration such as must have been felt by the people of Budapest and East Germany when they finally staged their suicidal revolts. Therefore, the objectives of the Minutemen are to abandon wasteful, useless efforts and begin immediately to prepare for the day when Americans will once again fight in the streets for their lives and their liberty. We feel there is overwhelming evidence to prove that this day must come.

At last, DePugh and his right-thinking friends were convinced, the only effective defense against "the Communist menace" had been found: They would fight fire with fire. In justification of his decision to launch the Minutemen, he cites the 1960 Annual Report of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, which concluded:

Events of the past year have provided convincing evidence that the American people cannot rely completely on this country's Armed Forces to protect themselves from Communist domination and slavery. This is not because our military forces lack the power or the will to defend this country, but rather because the nature of the attacks being made on the United States by its major and only significant enemy are so designed as to render conventional military forces as ineffective as possible for defense purposes.

From the outset, DePugh was undaunted by the odds against him. "We knew that the road ahead wasn't going to be easy," he says. "But we also remembered Edmund Burke's dictum that 'The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.' We were prepared to put our businesses, our freedom, our very lives on the line—and we have."

DePugh's nine fellow duck hunters were transmogrified overnight into the



"Don't be a spoilsport, Chester. How can I go to a spouse-swapping party without you?"

National Coordinating Council of the fledgling Minutemen of America, and DePugh appointed himself national coordinator. All were rank amateurs at political organization and, at first, the group's progress was halting. "Our own naïveté was our biggest obstacle," DePugh remembers. "None of us had any background in even local politics; I was a chemist, another founder was a veterinarian and the rest were real-estate agents, insurance men and autoworkers. We would have had difficulty getting a new Kiwanis post off the ground, much less organizing an effective clandestine resistance movement."

As a result of their political inexperience, few on the ultraright fringe had even heard of the Minutemen a year after its formation, and those who had, dismissed the group as an ineffectual cabal of crackpots issuing grandiose pronouncements on guerrilla warfare from the padded comfort of their armchairs. But slowly, a hard core of disciplined activists began gravitating to DePugh: disgruntled anti-Semites chafing at the John Birch Society's "soft" position on Jews, trigger-happy American Nazis disgusted with George Lincoln Rockwell's "do-nothing" approach and disillusioned dropouts from "responsible" outfits such as the Reverend Billy James Hargis' Christian Crusade. Surrounded by this handful of faithful apostles, the paramilitary messiah spread his nets on

conservative waters. The catch, though initially small, was promising. "We needed men ready to kill or be killed for their country," DePugh says of the lean early years, "and we found them." DePugh's life now had new direction and purpose; he had discovered the road for which he'd searched and he was prepared to travel it to the end.

It is not an easy task for an outsider to map that road, for DePugh had avoided public comment on the ultimate destination of his movement: armed revolution. The stated motivations and aspirations of the Minutemen, as set forth in DePugh's voluminous propaganda, appear simple: to prepare for a Communist invasion or uprising that can be resisted only by an underground paramilitary force. Minuteman leaders claim privately, however, that their aim is not to establish "self-defense" civilian auxiliaries to aid the Armed Forces in a national emergency but to overthrow and replace the United States Government through insurrection; and the Minutemen confidently predict that the day is approaching when they will be able to come out of hiding and forcibly seize the reins of power in a nation wracked by racial violence and economic chaos. In the ensuing struggle, Minutemen leaders say they are quite prepared to utilize all the tools of subversion—sabotage, assassination, terrorist attacks—not against a hypothetical Communist invader, but

against their own Government, which they consider riddled with card-carrying Reds and fellow travelers.

After poring over hundreds of pages of Minuteman literature—including DePugh's *Blueprint for Victory*, the movement's *Mein Kampf*—this reporter realized that little could be learned of the organization's real strategy or ultimate aims through its propaganda and even less through newspaper accounts of Minuteman activity, which amount to little more than a running account of arrests and convictions. To unravel the skein of the group's operations and discover how serious a menace it actually constitutes—as well as to find out what makes individual Minutemen tick—I phoned DePugh at his office in Independence, Missouri (national headquarters of his Patriotic Party), and requested an interview. I'd been warned by several journalists that as DePugh's legal problems multiplied he had grown increasingly chary of the press, which he viewed as a "handmaiden of the Communist conspiracy." But I was greeted with unexpected cordiality: "I'm tied up for the next five days, but I'll see you next week and give you as much time as you need," he promised. "No later, though. After that I'll be—tied up."

In the interim, he suggested I speak to Roy Frankhouser, Jr., in Reading, Pennsylvania, Grand Dragon of the Pennsylvania Ku Klux Klan and regional political coordinator of the Minutemen. He gave me Frankhouser's number and rang off. I reached Frankhouser that evening, and after some initial sparring managed to convince him that I had no ideological ax to grind. We arranged to meet two nights later; one of his men would pick me up at Reading's airport and drive me to an unidentified destination where Frankhouser would be waiting. It sounded mildly melodramatic, but I agreed. "We've got something laid on for that night," Frankhouser said enigmatically. "If you're lucky, we might even let you in on it."

The Reading trip wasn't one I would easily forget. I was met at the airport by a small-eyed man who identified himself as "Roger." Half an hour later, after changing cars twice, we rendezvoused with Frankhouser and his aide, Bob Richland, the Imperial Nighthawk of the state K. K. K. in the darkened parking lot of a Pennsylvania roadhouse. As Frankhouser and Richland jackknifed into the back seat beside me, Roger was restive and impatient.

"You're twenty minutes late," he said, in a hoarse whisper I'd at first thought was an affectation but later learned was his normal speaking voice. "They're expecting us at eleven."

"There was a wreck down the road," said Richland. "They had some girl laid out on the highway with her face bashed in. Her nose must have been

smashed all the way back into her skull; the whole top of her head looked like pink jelly." He was visibly upset. A well-groomed, lanky man in his late 30s, he sat hunched over, tugging nervously at the knot of his regimental-stripe tie—I wondered how his Ivy League taste had survived the change to Klan regalia—and wiping a crumpled silk handkerchief back and forth under his chin. "It was terrible. They'll never save her looks, and she must have been a pretty girl, too. White," he added.

Obviously discomfited by his lieutenant's squeamishness, Frankhouser reached over to slam the car door shut and told Roger to get going. "We'll have to kill lots of young girls before this fight is over," he grunted. "Black and white." He was a slight young man of 29 with close-cropped black hair, a pencil-thin mustache and one good eye. Articulate and sophisticated, he was a type more likely to be found debating Marcuse in campus New Left salons than regaling red-necks in the satin sheets of a K. K. K. Grand Dragon.

Richland didn't reply and Roger pulled the car out onto the highway leading to Pottsville. It was an overcast, bitterly cold night in late February and we were headed for an as-yet-unexplained Minuteman maneuver in the Appalachian Mountains. I was to be the first jour-

nalist included on such an "action mission," as opposed to standard training drills, and Frankhouser cautioned me to stay in the background.

"Some of the guys didn't want you along," he explained, "and they're liable to be a little edgy." He smiled and added: "Some of them think it might be a good idea if you didn't come back. It's pretty wild country up there and you can hide a lot of things—even nosy reporters."

His little joke over, he slapped my shoulder with bonhomie. "Don't worry," he said heartily. "We don't mind publicity this time."

As Roger's mud-spattered gray Ford pulled into the snowy foothills, Frankhouser finally explained the purpose of the mission: "We've got an underground bunker up there we use for storing heavy arms and a printing press. We just found out yesterday that some fink in another unit tipped off the FBI, so we've been cleaning everything out of the place before they move in." He lit a cigarette and chuckled expansively. "Tonight we blow the place up."

By now we had left the main highway and were careening precipitously up the mountainside. The Imperial Nighthawk, still shaken by his brush with nonideological violence, stared out the sleet-

laced window, but Frankhouser waxed loquacious, studiously disregarding the cautionary looks Roger occasionally darted over one shoulder.

"We've got hundreds of bunkers like this all over the country," he boasted, "all of them packed with machine guns, mortars and automatic weapons—and that's in addition to the caches of arms we wrap in plastic and bury underground. Our men do twenty-four-hour guard duty in shifts over each bunker to ensure security. When D day comes, we won't be in the streets with popguns."

"When *will* D day come?" I asked.

Frankhouser shrugged. "Who knows?" he replied. "But one thing is certain: For the first time since Huey Long, the stage is set for the rise of an American brand of fascism. Not that right-wingers can take any credit for it. The race riots have done our work for us; the black nationalists are our biggest recruiting agents; I wish there were a *hundred* Stokely Carmichaels and Rap Browns. After each Watts, each Detroit, we get thousands of new backlash members—and best of all, a big slice of them are disgruntled cops and National Guardsmen. Multiply those figures in light of what's going to happen in the big cities over the next three or four summers and you've really got the makings of a revolutionary situation. Under those

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circumstances, anything and everything is possible—including a right-wing takeover."

"Have Minutemen been involved in inciting the race riots?" I asked.

"You mean shooting at both sides to heat things up?" He smiled. "Not yet. Right now we can afford to just stand back on the side lines and pick up the pieces; we're the inheritors of social bankruptcy, you might say. And the same holds true for the black nationalists; after each bloody riot they get a lot of uncommitted niggers going over to their side. It's sort of a symbiotic situation. Let them shoot the Jews on their list, we'll shoot the Jews on ours, and then we can shoot each other!"

The idea amused him; he waved his hand magnanimously when Richland gestured suspiciously at the whirring tape recorder balanced on my lap. "It's all right. Let him print what he wants to. I don't have anything to hide—at least, not anything I'd tell him!"

I asked Frankhouser how the Minutemen planned to accomplish their seizure of power.

"Look at Germany and Italy," he said. "When the people see their society dissolving into chaos, when they're threatened on every side by riots and violence and economic convulsion, they'll turn to any force tough enough and ruthless

enough to impose order. That's what most people really want, you know—order. Not abstractions like freedom and equality and justice. That's all right for the fat times, but when the pinch is on, they want their property and their lives protected and they don't give a damn how it's done or who does it. That's why we're working and organizing now—not to take over tomorrow or the next day, which would be impossible, but to be ready when the time comes, and even a small, tight-knit and well-trained nucleus of men can play a role all out of proportion to its numbers. It only takes one wolf to terrorize a herd of sheep, you know. Cigarette?"

I declined. "The first thing we've got to do," he continued, "is disassociate ourselves from old-fogy conservatives like the John Birch Society. We've got to develop a radical revolutionary program that will appeal to the workingman on the two levels where he really lives—bread-and-butter issues and race. We've got to convince the worker that he's being economically oppressed by the powers-that-be and only we can save him. It's the carrot and the stick, in a sense; the niggers and the fear they breed are the stick, and the carrot is the promise of not only the assurance of safety from them but all the economic advantages we can deliver. We're really entering a

fantastically exciting age—an age of race war, where the color of your skin is your uniform."

Roger interrupted to tell us we were within a half mile of our destination, and to speak softly. He had switched the headlights off, and we now inched along at less than ten miles an hour. Frankhouser, rapt in his vision of the future, continued in muted tones.

"Hitler had the Jews; we've got the niggers. We have to put our main stress on the nigger question, of course, because that's what preoccupies the masses—but we're not forgetting the Jew. If the Jews knew what was coming—and believe me, it's coming as surely as the dawn—they'd realize that what's going to happen in America will make Nazi Germany look like a Sunday-school picnic. We'll build better gas chambers, and more of them, and this time there won't be any refugees. The average American has only a thin veneer of civilization separating him from the savage, you know—far less of a veneer than the Germans had. When that's stripped away and he really goes wild, when this thing really explodes, there'll be a rope hanging over the lamppost for every Jew and nigger in America. Jesus, I'd hate to be in their shoes! But you remember what Napoleon said about revolutions—you can't make an omelet without breaking eggs."

He paused and seemed to brood for a few seconds.

"Of course, there are some good Jews, you know, Jews like Dan Burros, who was a friend of mine. Yeah, print that some of my best friends are Jews. Dan Burros was one of the most patriotic, dedicated Americans you'll ever meet in your life."

Frankhouser fell silent. Burros was a fanatic American Nazi who served as Rockwell's lieutenant for years, then resigned in 1962 to edit a magazine called *Kill!* and finally became a Klan leader. He had rushed into Frankhouser's house in October 1965 brandishing an issue of *The New York Times* that exposed his Jewish ancestry, snatched a loaded pistol from the wall and blown his brains out.

Frankhouser's reverie was interrupted as the car came to a stop. After turning off the engine, Roger motioned the three of us to remain in our seats while he got out, holding what looked like a pair of castanets. Two loud, high-pitched clacks resounded through the thickly forested mountain slopes and were echoed almost instantly from up the road. I didn't see the two men, both dressed in plaid hunting jackets and matching caps, until they were within five feet of us. Both were young, with healthy outdoor faces, and both cradled 12-gauge shotguns under their arms. They said nothing, but Roger nodded to



"Take ... good ... care ... of ... yourself, ... you ... belong ... to ... me-e-e...."

them, and then to us. We climbed out and stood beside the car, shivering in the still, moonless night.

"This is him," said Roger, jerking a thumb in my direction. "He's got a tape recorder, so if you don't want to say anything, don't."

One of the men didn't acknowledge my presence, but his companion, a tanned six-footer in his early 20s, walked forward and pumped my hand vigorously, introducing himself as Tom Jordan.

"You just write the truth about us, mister, that's all, and we'll be real good friends." His smile was warm and open, his eyes empty. "We just *hate* to make enemies."

He turned and motioned us to follow him off the road and into the tangled underbrush. The snow was several inches deep and the going was difficult, doubly so since no one used a flashlight. We walked for about 20 minutes, most of the time in what appeared to be spirals—evidently to ensure that I would never be able to retrace our steps—and finally halted in a small clearing sentried by snow-laden pines. Roger clacked his noisemaker again; this time four men materialized out of the shadows, all dressed in identical hunting outfits, all carrying shotguns. Roger—who had lost a leg in Vietnam as a Green Beret—limped up to the group and spoke quietly for a moment, then called me to his side.

There were no introductions this time. He dug one booted foot into the ground and said, "Here it is. We've got everything out but the rockets. You can go take a look before we set the fuse."

I glanced down, but could see nothing but frozen earth. Roger's thin mouth grinned.

"Not bad, huh?" He reached over, pried his fingers into the ground and pulled up a dirt-covered trap door. A three-foot square of light glowed at my feet.

"The Feds could be standing on it and they'd never guess it was there," he said, as close to good humor as I ever saw him. "Go down and see for yourself."

I climbed with difficulty about 12 feet down a wooden ladder and into a narrow tunnel leading into a room approximately 22 feet long and 18 feet wide. The air was dank, and light flickered from three kerosene lamps hanging on the root-laced dirt walls. The bunker was equipped with electric light fixtures, but the generator, also underground, had been detonated earlier. There were two bunks built into a wall, a number of empty rifle racks and several lethal-looking red-finned rockets, each four feet long, reclining on rough-hewn pine shelves.

Roger clambered down behind me, followed by Frankhouser and the Impe-

rial Nighthawk. Jordan and the others remained outside.

"These rockets are little beauties," Roger told me, picking one up in his right hand like a toy. "They have a range of thirty miles with the right launching tube and carry one hell of a pay load. You could sit on a roof in New York and lob one of these on Newark and wipe out half a city block with nobody the wiser. It took us two years of experimenting and a lot of close calls before we got them operational, but now we're stockpiling them all across the country. They're light, portable and deadly—the ideal weapon for our kind of resistance movement."

Frankhouser called my attention to a small makeshift laboratory built into the back wall. "This is the chemical closet," he said, pointing to a jumble of Bunsen burners, beakers and empty test tubes. "Every bunker is equipped with one, no matter how rudimentary. We mainly use it for making nitroglycerin and nitroglycol."

I asked if that wasn't pretty volatile material to play around with, and Frankhouser appeared offended.

"We're not amateurs, you know. Every man in this unit goes through intensive training in the manufacture of nitroglycerin. If you've got the right chemicals and the right measurements, anybody with a fair degree of intelligence can do it."

He walked over to a half-empty steel filing cabinet, rifled through the drawers and extracted a sheaf of papers.

"These are a few of our confidential training manuals," he said, "but it won't do any harm for you to take a look." He handed me a three-page mimeographed pamphlet titled "Nitroglycerin." It began: "Basically, the production of nitroglycerin involves the gradual addition of glycerol to a mixture of nitric and sulphuric acids, followed by separation of the nitroglycerin from the waste products. The following directions will serve for the laboratory preparation of NG in small amounts." It concluded with the admonition to be careful in handling the solution, since "Nitro in its liquid form has from 30 to 60 times more explosive power than in dynamite form."

Roger slumped on one bunk in apparent boredom, but Frankhouser leaned over my shoulder, eagerly indicating other points of interest in the Minuteman ordnance manuals.

"That one is about Molotov cocktails," he said. "They're the crudest component of any resistance arsenal, but don't underestimate them on that account. They're still damn useful in street fighting or in terror bombings."

He handed me a booklet informing the student that "The best setup for making 'Molotov cocktails' is as follows: Using the small disposable-type beer bot-

tles, filled with a homemade napalm mixture of two-thirds gasoline and one-third Duz, fill the bottles and cap them with an inexpensive bottle capper available at most drugstores. Tape a regular Tampax sanitary device to each bottle with masking tape."

Frankhouser laughed as I finished reading it aloud. "We should really set up joint training sessions with the niggers, shouldn't we? A community of common interest, and all that shit."

I asked him what else was manufactured in the bunker's laboratory facilities.

"You'd be surprised at the wide range of killers you can produce with relatively unsophisticated equipment," he replied, referring me again to the Minuteman manual, where novitiates were instructed that "A good cheap explosive can be made by distilling iodine crystals. When kept in ammonia they are very stable, but when dried out, become highly explosive. . . . Pure sodium metal while dry is perfectly stable, but when placed in water is a terrific explosive. It burns with intense heat and gives off a deadly gas."

The manual contained instructions for even more imaginative lethal agents: "Methane gas (or nerve gas) is obtained when small slivers of [a common commercial plastic] are inserted in a cigarette. The results are always fatal, and almost immediate. The only known antidote is atropine, which must be taken immediately."

I asked Frankhouser if these sorts of weapons had been used by Minutemen in the terrorist attacks and bombings that have plagued civil rights and peace groups in recent years.

He grinned and said, "Let's just say we're not doing all this for our own amusement."

Roger glanced at his watch and told us the fuses were ready. As we turned to go, Frankhouser gestured to a small barrel at the foot of one bunk, from which two wires extended out the tunnel and up the ladder.

"That's filled with hydrogen gas," he explained. "We use the wires to spark it off electrically. This whole place will disappear without a trace. And the noise of the explosion is a damn sight less than dynamite, too; you won't be able to hear it more than a half mile away."

Lugging the last of their cached weapons, the three Minutemen led the way up the ladder. I was the last to go, and Frankhouser turned to look back over his shoulder at me as he reached the top rung.

"All we'd have to do is slam this trap door shut and leave you here to go up with the bunker." He smiled boyishly. "Unless somebody knew just where to look, they'd never find your body in a thousand years."

Forcing a smile, I climbed out into

the icy night air. Roger led us back to the edge of the clearing, stopping on the way to angrily snatch a cigarette from the Imperial Nighthawk's mouth and grind it out under his heel. Jordan was crouched over the wires that snaked out of the bunker's mouth. He looked up at Roger, waited for his nod, and then touched the two wires together. There was a soft muffled *blump* and the earth in the clearing rippled for a few seconds and then ebbed to its familiar contours. In the silence that followed, three of the men patted down the disturbed ground with spades while Jordan cut off the wires with a pair of shears where they extended from the earth.

Frankhouser, the Imperial Nighthawk and I turned to follow Roger back to the car.

"A shame that place was compromised," Frankhouser murmured as we trudged through the snow, "but we've got plenty more."

As I left the car, back at my downtown hotel, Frankhouser told me, "What you've seen tonight may not seem too impressive in a military sense. But remember, it only takes one match to ignite a tinderbox." With a sure flair for melodrama, he lit a cigarette and flicked the match into the gutter. Roger didn't say good night.

Five days later, I took a plane for

Kansas City. When I checked in at the airport motel, DePugh was waiting for me as arranged. Tall and heavy-set, he was dressed casually in khaki slacks and a red wool pullover. His jet-black hair was receding, and he sported a luxuriant beard, "for my home town's centennial celebration"—an explanation I had no reason to doubt at the time, although I later discovered there was a different and far more practical reason. DePugh's features were handsome in a rawboned fashion, but his skin was unusually pale in the muted light of the motel coffee shop where we had an early lunch before driving to his office in Norborne. His dark eyes were deep-set and commanding, with a disconcerting habit of dancing around and beyond mine as he spoke and then suddenly fixing on me with a baleful stare to punctuate a point. In the time I spent with him, DePugh was invariably friendly and accommodating, but I never felt completely comfortable under that gaze.

Sipping a lemonade—he neither drinks nor smokes, but sucks constantly on medicated throat lozenges—DePugh went out of his way to put me at ease.

"From what the press prints about us, you probably expected me to be waiting for you with a Thompson sub-machine gun," he said, smiling. "But I'm glad you came, and I want you to

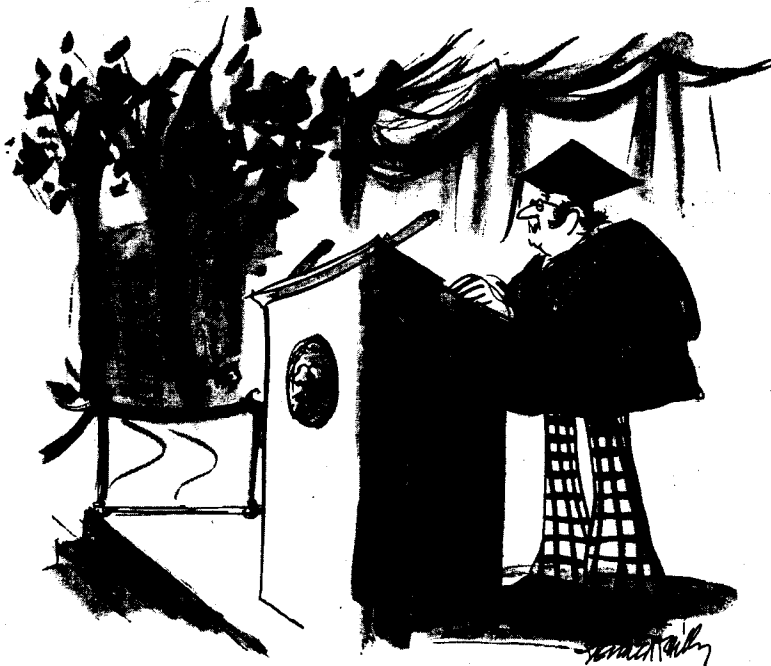
be my guest while you're here. There's a lot I have to say, and not much time to say it in."

At the time, I missed the significance of that last remark, and merely wondered how he had earned his reputation for taciturn hostility to the press.

DePugh drove me to Norborne in his dusty station wagon, crammed with unopened correspondence and cartons stamped with the name of his veterinary-medicine firm. He appeared preoccupied on the ride and chatted desultorily about his impending four-year sentence for violation of the Federal Firearms Act, assuring me that the cache of machine guns discovered on his property by Federal agents was planted there as part of a "political frame-up." I asked him if he would peacefully surrender to serve his sentence when and if his appeals to the higher courts were exhausted. "I'll cross that bridge when I come to it," he replied.

DePugh's spirits seemed to lighten when we left Highway 10 and pulled into Norborne, a dusty farm community of 950 people, most of whom seem not to have decided whether their celebrated neighbor has put the town on the map or blackened its name with notoriety. The Biolab Corporation, a seedy seven-room, one-story white stucco building on Main Street, doubles as Minutemen headquarters, and the front room was piled high with literature and back copies of the organization's house organ, *On Target*. The sickly sweet smell of a vitamin A preparation clung heavily in the air and, in the back, veterinary medicines were being mixed in two huge vats by white-smocked lab technicians. DePugh introduced me to his wife, a small apple-dumpling woman with a sweet smile and haggard eyes, and to his daughter Christine, a pert red-head who had recently been elected high school home-coming queen and was now addressing envelopes at an overflowing desk. He then ushered me into his private office, a windowless room lined with floor-to-ceiling bookshelves. DePugh slumped into the leather swivel chair behind his desk—ornamented with an anti-aircraft shell and littered with clips of .30-caliber ammunition and unopened letters—and shouted for coffee, which was served us by a teenager with a scraggly beard whom he proudly introduced as a Minuteman infiltrator in the national headquarters of the leftist W. E. B. DuBois Clubs.

As we sipped our coffee, I glanced at some of the books on his shelves: *Texts on guerrilla warfare* by Ché Guevara, *General Giap*, *Mao Tse-tung* and *General Grivas of the Cypriot resistance movement* adjoined *H. C. Lea's three-volume occult classic Materials Toward a History of Witchcraft*, the *Department of State's four-volume Documents of German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, *Assault Battle Drill* by Major General J. C.



"As we look back over the course of four years, we realize that the university is a living, growing entity—never stagnant, forever in transition...."

Fry, *On War* by Von Clausewitz and assorted volumes of Kant, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, George Orwell and Boris Pasternak. If nothing else, DePugh's reading tastes were catholic.

He watched me cataloging his library and then smiled indulgently. "If you're looking for *Mein Kampf*, it's not there," he said. "I read and reread it when I was a teenager. I could quote it to you from memory."

"Were you impressed?" I asked.

"I'm a compulsive reader," he said. "A lot of things impress me."

As my tape recorder spun quietly on the desk between us, I told DePugh about my icy foray into the Appalachians with his "troops," and asked how the caches of arms they were stockpiling across the nation would ultimately be used.

"Those stockpiles are being laid away for the time when the struggle reaches the point of armed confrontation. In the interim, we intend to continue our campaign of overt political propaganda and proselytizing."

"Do you really believe a handful of men with machine guns, mortars and homemade bombs could ever overcome the United States Army, the National Guard and local police forces?" I asked.

"First of all, we'll have a lot more than a handful of men ready to fight when the time comes. Of course, we could never overwhelm the Government's military power in conventional, set-piece battles; but the whole purpose of revolutionary guerrilla warfare is to so terrorize and demoralize the state apparatus that it'll collapse from its own internal stresses and contradictions. Castro didn't conquer Cuba militarily; at the time Batista fled into exile, the government forces still had overwhelming military superiority and could have wiped out the rebels in a traditional military battle—but Castro and Guevara blended political persuasion and terrorism with guerrilla warfare so effectively that they undermined the state's morale and its capacity to defend itself. Even after Dien Bien Phu, the French still maintained military supremacy in Indochina and could have fought on for years against the Vietminh; but Giap's brilliant use of insurgency tactics eroded the French will to resist and they scuttled and ran. At the height of his effectiveness on Cyprus, General Grivas had only one hundred full-time terrorists—but by selective assassinations and terrorism and dynamic use of psychological warfare, he brought the British to their knees."

He steeped his fingers thoughtfully.

"The success of any guerrilla insurgency is predicated on two factors: discontent among the population and irresolution in the state apparatus. Ruthless exploitation of those elements by even a tiny minority

of insurgents can topple a government with the strongest military force at its disposal."

I listened, absorbed. Despite his fanaticism, and the patent absurdity of his *Weltanschauung*, the man emanated a disturbing aura of power and purpose. I had traveled to Kansas City expecting to encounter a corn-belt Robert Welch, an untutored hick demagogically peddling the tired nostrums of the ultraright, leavened with a filip of paramilitarism to titillate the lunatic fringe; instead, I had found an urbane, intelligent, even mildly cynical political theorist who appeared seriously to envisage the day when his followers would seize power in a nation bled dry by racial wars and ravaged at home by racial strife and economic upheaval.

He continued: "A key factor in the U. S. is that in the crunch we could count on support from sizable segments of the Armed Forces and police; in fact, if you break down Minuteman membership into employment categories, you'll find more cops than any other single group."

"You mentioned assassination as a particularly effective method of terrorizing the opposition," I said. "Are the Minutemen prepared to liquidate their political enemies? Have they already begun to do so?"

DePugh seemed prepared for the question. "You could hardly expect me to tell you if we'd removed anybody in the past," he said. "We don't volunteer that kind of information. In fact, up till now the Minutemen have adhered to what I call the principle of deliberate delay. The past eight years have been used to marshal our strength, to train and harden our cadres for the time when we'll be dealing in bullets instead of pamphlets; any premature action such as assassination could only give the state a perfect excuse for cracking down on us, and I've deliberately discouraged it."

"Then you've refrained from resorting to assassination only for strategic reasons?" I asked.

"I have no moral qualms whatsoever about political assassination. The stakes in this struggle are too high, for both America and all of Western civilization, for us to forgo any means, however brutal, that could tip the scales in our favor. In fact, of course, we're entering a praetorian age of assassination and counterassassination, where political questions won't be decided by the quality of your argument, but by the quality of your marksmanship."

He plucked the silver foil from a throat lozenge and popped it into his mouth. "You know," he went on, "one man with a telescopic rifle can have more impact on the course of history than a hundred political treatises or a dozen political parties. In any society

there are certain individuals who are the keystones of the state structure—and if they're surgically removed, one by one, the whole edifice could collapse."

He smiled. "When you really think about it, assassination is a relatively humane means of effecting political change. Instead of riots and revolutions and street battles that would kill hundreds of thousands, you merely eliminate a policy by eliminating its architects. Quite a progressive concept, actually."

"Are you training Minutemen as political assassins?" I asked.

He looked through a mound of papers on his desk and tossed me a four-page mimeographed pamphlet stamped CONFIDENTIAL. "When using telescopic sights," the paper began, "the sniper aims his rifle by placing the top of the post reticle (the cross hairs in most civilian-type scope sights) on the aiming point. But the sniper's final concentration should be on the reticle rather than the target." Every problem confronting the aspiring assassin, from adverse winds to crowds surrounding his victim, was covered; and particular attention was given to targets in moving vehicles: "At an average speed of 2100 feet per second, it will require one-half second for the bullet to travel 350 yards. During this half second an automobile would move about seven feet for each ten miles per hour it was traveling. At 50 miles per hour the vehicle would travel 35 feet in this one-half second. Since the average passenger car is about 12 feet long, it will be necessary to lead the front edge of the car by three and one half lengths for the bullet to strike in the vicinity of the driver's seat."

Two more pages of detailed instructions on firing distances and velocity ensued, complete with diagrams, followed by exhortations on accuracy when sniping at targets moving on foot. As I finished reading, DePugh leaned back in his chair. "That's just the basic instructions every one of our members starts out with," he said. "We follow it up with months of training and firing at moving and stationary targets. Man for man, we probably have better marksmen than the Army or Marines."

I started to hand the document back to him, but he waved it aside.

"Keep it as a souvenir," he said. "Maybe some day there'll be somebody you want out of the way, and it'll come in useful."

He crunched his lozenge. "Actually, you know, a rifle is a relatively crude means of killing a man. We go through damn thorough arms training, but guns are only one small element in a really modern resistance arsenal. All this stress on gun control and registration has always given me sort of a chuckle; I've often thought of writing a book called *1001 Ways to Kill a Man Without*

Using Firearms—dedicated to Senator Dodd, of course."

"Would you care to name a few?"

"Well, the most lethal weapons at our disposal are chemical- and bacteriological-warfare agents. The man in the street seems to believe there's something science-fictional about these devices—that they can only be manufactured in ultrasophisticated, top-secret Government laboratories. But the unique thing about C.B.W. agents is that they can be produced with a minimum of laboratory facilities, and at surprisingly low cost. All that's needed is a certain level of education and training and relatively rudimentary equipment; almost any competent chemist, for example, could synthesize deadly nerve gases of various types."

I knew DePugh was a trained chemist, and his Biolab facilities were far from rudimentary. "Have you ever tried to produce nerve gas yourself?" I asked.

Through the open door I could see his pretty teenage daughter laughing coquettishly with the hippie-Minuteman who had brought our coffee. My question struck me as unreal.

"Yes, we've done it right here at Biolab, and elsewhere across the country." DePugh smiled as he added, "Though our initial experiment got me into hot water with my kids. A few years ago, we developed our first batch of nerve gas and decided to try out a sample on the family pet, a one-hundred-eighty-pound Irish wolfhound. We diluted it down to approximately one tenth of what we thought would trigger a noticeable physiological response and gave him a whiff; he walked about six steps and fell over dead as a doornail. We tried artificial respiration and gave him oxygen, but none of our efforts could revive him and my children didn't speak to me for a week!"

The smile faded, and he stroked the anti-aircraft shell on his desk pad abstractedly.

"Of course, our techniques are much more sophisticated now. We have a number of our own physicians and bacteriologists working on the production of biological agents and, just as important, antitoxins to immunize our own men. Most of this research goes on after hours in public and private institutions

where they hold a regular job during the day and have an opportunity to moonlight a few hours in the evening on projects of their own. I'd suspect that some C.B.W. agents researched by us are even further developed than anything the Regular Army has; we've gone into such advanced phases of biological warfare as the selective breeding of various pathogens in order to increase or decrease their virulence and to render them resistant to antibiotics. You know, a knowledge of bacteriology coupled with a knowledge of genetics can produce pathological agents that are unique, that exist nowhere in nature; and a number of these have qualities particularly well suited to the activities of a resistance movement. They're portable, inexpensive to manufacture and easy to conceal; one man with a test tube in his pocket could wipe out a whole Army base. We would obviously never unleash such agents among the general population. This would only turn public sentiment unalterably against us. But by controlling virulence and range, we've got a selective death-dealing weapon that could effectively terrorize the opposition."

Mrs. DePugh entered the room to inform us that dinner would be at six and that she was going home now to bake a blueberry pie—"Bob's favorite dessert." DePugh tossed her the car keys.

With a deepening sense of unreality, I resumed our conversation. "What specific biological agents are the Minutemen currently working on?"

"There are fifty or sixty possibilities," he said, "but we've narrowed our sights down to seven that we feel are particularly well suited to guerrilla activity. Pneumonic-plague bacillus is one hell of a killer, but it's difficult to reduce the plague's virulence sufficiently to use it on specific targets without infecting the innocent. We've had the most success to date with equine encephalitis virus. We've developed three unique strains of it that we feel hold substantial promise and offer many interesting opportunities. One strain in particular, developed by a doctor in Oregon, is really a honey."

"When do you plan to put these biological agents to use?"

"Certainly not at this stage of the game," DePugh replied. "We'd only employ C.B.W. when the struggle had reached the final point of armed confrontation between us and the state. Right now we're essentially still in a premilitary phase, a period where terrorism and assassination may play a growing role, but not as in open, all-out struggle. For one thing, the population isn't ready to support an underground resistance movement yet; the economic and racial situations haven't deteriorated sufficiently. This is the time for the stiletto, not the howitzer. A poison that will kill one key man is more valuable



"As I understand it, the guaranteed annual income would come to about a quart a day."

to us now than a pathogen that can neutralize five thousand."

"Are you manufacturing poisons, too?" I asked.

"Our medical-research teams have also done exhaustive research in toxicology, and have selected a number of poisons that could be quite productive under the proper circumstances. There's really no such thing as a poison that doesn't leave a trace, you know, but there are poisons that are extremely difficult to detect in the system. Take insulin, which is readily available from any pharmacist and is a natural ingredient of the body. A dose of insulin that would have no effect on a diabetic would kill a healthy human being. But how would an autopsy ever be able to determine that it was murder, since any traces of insulin discovered in the system could just as well belong there naturally? Another dandy poison that's extremely difficult for a pathologist to detect is succinylcholine. You may remember that this is what the prosecution claimed Dr. Cappelino used to kill his wife, but the murderer messed things up by injecting it all in one place on the visible skin surface. If he'd been more cautious and dispersed it in two or three spots, preferably under the scalp, nobody would have been the wiser, because the likelihood of detecting succinylcholine in a routine autopsy is virtually nil."

He fiddled with a clip of .30-caliber ammunition. "But you don't even have to be that sophisticated; there are a number of common household items that make fine poisons. Take ordinary [he named a common automotive fluid], for example," DePugh said, "which has an ethylene-glycol base. Ethylene glycol has a pleasant, sweetish taste and can easily be added to a soft drink or a slice of custard pie without your victim ever detecting it before it's too late. One half to one ounce is a fatal dose, and there's no known antidote. It does leave observable lesions that can be detected in a medical examination, but the crucial point to remember is that in most cases of sudden death, an autopsy is not performed and death is attributed to natural causes. There aren't enough doctors in the country to perform an autopsy on everybody who appears to have died of heart failure or shock or kidney disease or diabetic seizure or liver hemorrhage. Let's say you've slipped a dose of ethylene glycol into somebody's food. The average doctor would examine the outward symptoms and invariably diagnose the cause of death as heart failure—which it was, of course, but artificially induced. Even when you do have a post-mortem, unless the authorities have reason to suspect foul play, it's a pretty slipshod, *pro forma* affair. Believe me, if you select the right poison and go about it carefully, it's the

easiest thing in the world to kill a man. More coffee?"

I looked down at the dregs in my cup for a long moment before shaking my head.

"Personally," he continued matter-of-factly, "I have a distinct preference for nicotine sulphate, a common liquid alkaloid that can be administered orally, intravenously or through direct absorption by the skin. What's lovely about it is that it's almost instantaneously fatal and leaves no traces except in the blood stream—and even in an autopsy, it's very rare to take a blood analysis, believe it or not. Nicotine sulphate is readily available in a wide range of gardening solutions; all you'd have to do is distill the mixture, slip some into your target's beer, or refill his after-shaving lotion with it. It's absorbed quickly, particularly if he's nicked himself while shaving, and unless it's washed off with cold water within sixty seconds, it'll cause dizziness, collapse, respiratory paralysis and death."

He then described another poison so easy to manufacture that I am unwilling to write about it for a wide-circulation magazine. After this I asked: "Do you have any other favorite poisons?"

He thought a moment. "Well, the Russian K. G. B. has done great things with a cyanide gas gun. You may remember that one of their assassins who defected to the West in Berlin a few years ago, a guy named Bogdan Stashinsky, confessed to having liquidated two prominent Ukrainian exiles with an ordinary water pistol filled with cyanide. All you have to do is wait on a stair well till your victim passes you, cover your nose and mouth with a damp handkerchief and spray him in the face. The first inhalation is fatal, and within sixty seconds all cyanide smell in the air will be dissipated. Since the target has died climbing a flight of stairs, death is invariably diagnosed as heart failure—as was the case with the two Ukrainians."

"Have you actually stockpiled any of these poisons and viruses?"

His face was expressionless. "Those—and more."

"Whom do you intend using them on?"

"On the enemies of this country," he said gravely, pushing his chair back and walking to my side. "Come in here, and I'll show you something I haven't showed any other journalist."

I followed DePugh from his office through a dusty storeroom heaped with empty jars labeled "Biolab, Vitamin Supplements" and into a large room littered with old newspapers and magazines. There was no furniture other than eight steel file cabinets, each drawer securely padlocked. He stood in the middle of the room and gestured toward them.

"We're in the process of dispersing all our subversive files," he said. "What you

see here is only our California records. The master files—containing over one hundred thousand names from all fifty states—have been buried underground in several places across the country, and cross-indexed lists broken down by state, county and city have gone out to local branches. In recent months, we've totally decentralized our intelligence system so that if something should happen to me or this headquarters, our records will still be intact."

He took a key from his pocket and opened the top drawer on the end cabinet. It was packed with hundreds of three-by-five-inch white file cards, arranged in alphabetical order.

"Each of these file cards has a corresponding dossier in California regional headquarters." He selected a card at random. "Here's a Commie who lives in Sausalito. The card lists his name, address and phone number, and California headquarters has a comprehensive portfolio containing all the information we've gathered on his movements, his job, his personal tastes—women, liquor, boys, drugs, etc. When and if the time comes to neutralize him, we'll have all the information down pat."

He returned the card and slammed the drawer shut, locking it and carefully testing the handle.

"We have eighteen thousand names in the California file alone. Now, needless to say, we've had to break these down according to the importance of the individual in the over-all scheme of things and establish a set of priorities." He tapped the first drawer. "File A contains the names of the run-of-the-mill fellow travelers and parlor pinks, the types who join different Red fronts or show up on picket lines but aren't full-time operatives. They're essentially dilettantes and, although they have to be kept under surveillance and someday dealt with, they don't constitute a really serious threat." He rapped his knuckles on the second drawer. "File B here contains the cards of those who are the next step up the subversive ladder—full-time Party members, draft-card burners, civil rights agitators. Whenever we have the man power, we try to keep them under full-time surveillance, but they're still fairly small fish." His eyes narrowed, and he reached down and unlocked the bottom drawer, which contained fewer cards. "Now this is file C—the really dangerous types, the big-time operators, the most dedicated enemies of our country in this particular state. These sons of bitches we give special attention."

"If you're convinced that these people are all traitors, what action do you propose to take against them?"

He smiled enigmatically. "Effective action—when the time comes."

"Would that include assassination?" I asked.

His voice was neutral. "Anyone listed

in file C has betrayed his country to the most ruthless enemies it has ever known. The penalty for treason is death, and if the execution of the sentence is left to us—well, we accept the responsibility." He smiled. "Don't worry, your name isn't on the New York list. I checked before you came out here."

A spare, wiry man with a grizzled mustache whom I hadn't seen before entered the room. "Seattle's on the line," he said expressionlessly.

"I'll be right back," DePugh murmured, his jaw tightening as he followed the other man out.

Alone for a moment, I began copying down some of the names in the Minuteman C file. Each card in the file was a photostatic copy, the names and addresses triple spaced. I had time to jot down 11 potential victims before DePugh returned. Most of the addresses were in the Stanford area and none of the names familiar. I heard DePugh's footsteps and slipped my pad and pencil away seconds before he opened the door. He appeared preoccupied, no longer avid to display his intelligence records.

"Let's go eat," he said, returning the file to the drawer and locking it. "It's been a long day."

As we left the building, I asked DePugh how he could be certain that his information on more than 100,000 names across the country was accurate. "Suppose you were to give the order to liquidate somebody in your C file," I suggested, "and it turned out subsequently that he wasn't a subversive at all. How would you feel about sending an innocent man to his death?"

He shrugged. "About as guilty as Lyndon Johnson feels sending thousands of kids to die in Vietnam," he replied in a bored tone. "And anyway, our files are constantly checked and double-checked for accuracy. If we put somebody on the C list, he *belongs* there."

"Are there any prominent names on the list?" I asked as we walked along Norborne's streets toward his house.

He chuckled. "There are names on that list that anybody who reads a newspaper would recognize."

"Would you care to name a few of them?"

"Why not? Secretary Robert *Strange* McNamara," he replied, hissing the middle name sibilantly, "Hubert Humphrey, William Fulbright, Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King. [This was early March 1968—one month before King's assassination, three months before Kennedy's.] They're the most dangerous men in America, though God knows they're not alone."

His face suddenly hardened, and he halted and gripped me by the arm. "Remember what I told you earlier

about the principle of deliberate delay?" he asked. "Well, that phase of the struggle is just about over. The Minutemen are now entering the revolutionary stage of our activities, and from now on no holds are barred." He released my arm abruptly and pulled the wrapper off another lozenge. "No holds at all. We're through talking."

I asked him what had caused this sudden change of tactics, but he just shook his head wordlessly and walked on in silence. Suddenly, his eyes brightened. "Here's my place. You're going to love the wife's blueberry pie!"

After DePugh dropped me off at my motel later that evening, I was unable to sleep. Throughout dinner and during the ride back from Norborne, he had elaborated messianically on his hopes for the future, occasionally ranging off into such disparate topics as the responsibility of the existential philosophers ("the cult of nausea," as he characterized them) for modern *Weltschmerz*, and the contradictions of Keynesian economics. He was a civilized, frequently witty conversationalist, and only once did the mask slip—when I asked him how enduring he thought Martin Luther King's nonviolent philosophy would prove in light of rising black militancy. "That phony bastard!" His knuckles on the steering wheel were white. "He's been a Red agitator for years. And they give the Nobel Peace Prize to that fraud, the *Reverend* Martin Luther King!" He spat out *Reverend* as if it were a dirty word.

The next morning, DePugh failed to keep his appointment at my motel, and no one answered the phone at his home or office. Later that evening, I learned from a friend in the Associated Press that a Seattle grand jury had issued a warrant for his arrest on bank-robbing-conspiracy charges the day before and, one step ahead of the law, DePugh had gone into hiding. I suddenly realized the real reason for the beard and, more importantly, for DePugh's uncharacteristic frankness with me: He viewed our interview as his last public appearance, his swan song before entering what he termed the "underground phase of the resistance." It may also have accounted for his statement, shortly after receiving the phone call from Seattle, that the principle of deliberate delay was a thing of the past and the Minutemen were now entering a new phase of terrorism and assassination.

In the months since our final meeting—marked by the assassinations of Dr. King and Senator Kennedy and a new spate of terror attacks on peace and civil rights advocates—DePugh has successfully eluded the police, issuing underground news bulletins to the faithful

with apparent impunity. (*Underground Bulletin No. 2*, issued from "somewhere in the United States" after the election, charged that George Wallace's American Independent Party is Communist-controlled. When the "enemy" failed to gain control of his Patriotic Party, DePugh wrote his followers, it turned to the A.I.P., which today "is controlled at the top by the same hidden hand that controls the Democratic Party and the Republican Party.") His FBI "Wanted" circular cautions that "DePugh reportedly carries a pistol and has access to other types of weapons, including hand grenades. Consider extremely dangerous."

Even if DePugh is apprehended and imprisoned, there is little doubt that the Minutemen will continue to function; well before he went into hiding, he selected a "second string" of leaders to run the organization in the event of his death or incarceration. But the basic question remains: Can DePugh and his Minutemen really do what they say? The answer seems to be that they cannot by themselves—but they are not alone. Other paramilitary groups are burgeoning across the country under the stimulus of growing racial unrest. Some of these are leftist, and some black, such as the Black Panthers. But there is little doubt that the largest and most organized groups cluster around DePugh's end of the political spectrum. He is on particularly close terms with the Reverend Kenneth Goff of Englewood, Colorado, leader of the Soldiers of the Cross, an organization of between 3000 and 12,000 members, operating primarily in California and the Southwest. Goff, who graduated from the Communist Party to Gerald L. K. Smith's Christian Anti-Communist Crusade and went into the witch-hunting business on his own several years ago, blends Protestant fundamentalism and anti-Semitism (his oft-repeated theme is that "The United Nations is as Jewish as Coney Island") with judo, karate, *savate*, torture, mutilation and such desert survival techniques as the eating of toads and grasshoppers.

Another group on good fraternal terms with the Minutemen—and with Goff's outfit—is the California Rangers, commanded by Colonel William P. Gale, U. S. Army (Ret.), who organized Philippine guerrilla forces against the Japanese in World War Two as an aide to General Douglas MacArthur. Gale views the Communists as tools of "the international Jewish conspiracy: You got your nigger Jews, you got your Asiatic Jews and you got your white Jews. They're all Jews and they're all the offspring of the Devil." The colonel's favorite aphorism is, "Turn a nigger inside out and you've got a Jew"; and he contends that Adolf Hitler's reputation as a war criminal is all a

misunderstanding: "I can show you top-secret documents that prove the six million Jews Hitler was supposed to have killed are right here in America. And if we run them out of here, they'll go down to South America and start screaming about how we burned them in gas chambers. I've got two ovens ready for them now."

The Rangers are one component of an intricate network of religio-paramilitary groups operating in California and the Southwest. A report by the California attorney general reveals that the Rangers "have intimate connections with the Ku Klux Klan, the National States Rights Party, the Christian Defense League and the Church of Jesus Christ—Christian," in addition to the Minutemen. The Church of Jesus Christ—Christian, founded in 1946, has blossomed into a string of affluent parishes from California to Florida. Its founder, the Reverend Dr. Wesley Swift of Lancaster, California, reaches over 1,000,000 listeners with his weekly radio broadcasts, which artfully blend racism and evangelism. His subordinates faithfully carry out their concept of the Christian mission: The Reverend Oren Potito, minister of the sect's St. Petersburg, Florida, parish and representative of its Eastern Conference, was arrested in Oxford, Mississippi, in October 1962 while organizing demonstrations against the admission of James Meredith to the University of Mississippi; police confiscated a small cache of firearms in his car. The church's most charismatic preacher is the Reverend Connie Lynch, a peripatetic anti-Negro demagog who wears a Confederate flag as a vest. Also a member of the Ku Klux Klan and the Minutemen, Lynch was the chief organizer of the bloody anti-Negro riots in St. Augustine in 1964, and in 1966 he traveled to Chicago to help

George Lincoln Rockwell whip up whites against Negro open-housing demonstrators.

Informally linked to both Swift and DePugh is the National States Rights Party, with headquarters in Savannah, Georgia, and, next to the Minutemen, the largest paramilitary organization in the nation. The N.S.R.P. has chapters in every state of the Union, but refuses to release its membership figures; a conservative estimate is 2000 members and 8000 to 12,000 active sympathizers. The party was formed in 1958 by Dr. Edward R. Fields, a chiropractor—who had previously initiated an "Anti-Jew Week" in the course of which he plastered the windows of Jewish-owned shops with anti-Semitic stickers—and Jesse B. Stoner, an attorney whose prior ventures into politics were as kleeagle of the K.K.K. in Chattanooga and founder of the short-lived Stoner Christian Anti-Jewish Party, which advocated making Judaism a capital offense. His subsequent activities include legal representation of James Earl Ray, the convicted killer of Dr. Martin Luther King. Membership in the N.S.R.P. is, predictably, restricted to "white Christian Americans," and the Negro is described in the party organ as "a higher form of gorilla."

This rabid racist group was initially political in orientation and contested local elections—running on a platform of deportation for America's entire Jewish and Negro populations—in several Southern states. But by 1960, Fields reconstructed the party along paramilitary lines: A party uniform (white shirt, black tie, black trousers and arm bands emblazoned with a thunderbolt insignia reminiscent of the Nazi SS emblem) was designed, arms were stockpiled and strict military discipline imposed on all members.

N.S.R.P. activists have been involved in a number of terrorist attacks on Ne-

groes and Jews. The party first broke into the news on October 12, 1958, when a dynamite blast destroyed a Jewish synagogue in Atlanta; five men were arrested and tried for the crime, all of them N.S.R.P. members. In 1963—the same year the party launched a "Fire Your Nigger" campaign to drive more Negroes out of the South—a scuffle erupted in San Bernardino, California, between uniformed N.S.R.P. pickets and high school students, during which one of the storm troopers shot and wounded a student. On September 15, 1963, Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist Church was shattered by a dynamite blast during Sunday services, and four Negro children died. An N.S.R.P. member was arrested in connection with the bombing, charged with illegal possession of dynamite and—in the absence of conclusive eyewitness evidence placing him at the scene—sentenced to six months in prison. After an N.S.R.P. rally in Anniston, Alabama, in late 1965, in which speakers urged patriots to drive "the nigger out of the white man's street," one of the galvanized party sympathizers in the audience took off in his car with two friends and fatally shot the first Negro he saw.

In recent years, the National States Rights Party has solidified its links with other right-wing paramilitary organizations—including the Minutemen—and urged its members to increase their stockpiles of weapons. The N.S.R.P. is still relatively small, but growing—and so is its potential for violence. Its membership reflects considerable cross-pollination with the Klan and the Minutemen, but its leaders fail to exercise even the comparative verbal restraint of the pre-underground DePugh. The California Senate Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities has warned that "This organization is . . . more potentially dangerous than any of the American Nazi groups."

The Ku Klux Klan, despite its long record of violence, has not until recently become a genuine paramilitary organization. The Klan has traditionally been an instrument of local terrorism rather than national revolution. Its murders, beatings and tortures have generally been carried out as vigilante acts of vengeance against "uppity" Negroes and real or imagined white traitors to the "Southern way of life," rather than as part of an orchestrated program of subversion. But all that is changing.

Today there are over a dozen Klans functioning across the country. According to political historian George Thayer, "Each one guards its individuality most jealously, refusing to subordinate itself to any one man's rule. The current strength of all Klans together is estimated to be from 50,000 to 100,000, with an additional 1,000,000 sympathizers." The largest and most violent Klan—and the one most closely



"I don't care what the vote was, Miss Finch—the senior-class play will not be 'Hair.'"

linked to the Minutemen—is the United Klans of America, run with an iron hand by Robert Shelton of Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Shelton's Klans have at least 40,000 members—some estimates run as high as 85,000—scattered through 48 states, including Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Illinois, Delaware, Ohio, Wisconsin, Nebraska and Indiana. (Pennsylvania Grand Dragon Roy Frankhouser, Jr., claims—possibly with some truth—that there are currently more Kluxers in Wisconsin than in South Carolina.)

Under Shelton's leadership, the Klans have adopted a distinctly paramilitary orientation. Large caches of arms, including automatic weapons, have been stockpiled across the country; Klan "military committees" have been established to teach members the techniques of guerrilla warfare; "rifle clubs" and "sportsmen's clubs" have been established as fronts; and Klansmen are instructed by Shelton to join the National Rifle Association, thus allowing them to buy Government-subsidized ammunition at low prices. Klansmen have been holding more and more field exercises, Minutemen style, where members are taught sniper and rapid-fire shooting and instructed in mortar firing and the construction and handling of dynamite, fuses, Molotov cocktails and booby traps. (A recent Klan exercise taught trainees how to sabotage radio stations and power plants.) One paramilitary Klan group—Nacirema, Inc.—is even alleged to specialize in assassination. Its members are composed of the elite of Klan toughs, and are exhaustively trained in the tactics of terrorism and sabotage. The "VIP Security Guard," an organization of bodyguards for Klan rallies, outfitted in white helmets and gray shirts and slacks, is also reportedly being enlarged into a well-armed private police force. In plain clothes, its members served as bodyguards for George Wallace at his American Independent Party rallies; when Wallace visited Pennsylvania in 1967, K.K.K. Grand Dragon and Minuteman chief Frankhouser organized his "security detail."

"In the old days," Frankhouser explains, "the Klan was a means of terrorizing the niggers and carpetbaggers and protecting local institutions. But that way of life has been destroyed forever, and the Klan has had to stop fighting a futile rear-guard action and change with the times. We're not out to conserve the system now, but to change it in ways that will protect the white race—even if that means a revolution. The Klan is a nationwide organization today, not a regional defense force, and our tactics and strategy are attuned to the Twentieth Century. Along with the Minutemen, the Klan is developing thousands of dedicated guerrilla fighters.

If the niggers push us too far, we won't be burning crosses—we'll be burning cities."

But Frankhouser denies any formal organizational unity between Shelton's Klan and the Minutemen: "We work independently, but we also complement each other, and the lines of communication are always open between us. The Klan's military committees are doing exactly what the Minutemen are doing: training men in weapons equipment and handling, in caching weapons, in all the tactics of clandestine warfare. We've got the same enemies, the same friends and the same goals. We're fighting under different leadership, but we're fighting *together* just the same."

In addition to the major paramilitary organizations, a host of lesser groups have appeared on the national horizon in the past two years—primarily in response to the deteriorating racial situation in the ghettos of the major cities. After the devastating Detroit riots, local right-wingers formed an outfit called Breakthrough, which urges members to arm and organize their neighborhoods block by block into a cohesive vigilante force. In late 1967, Breakthrough leader Donald Lobsinger organized the General Douglas MacArthur Shooting Club and admonished his followers to join both it and the N. R. A. in order to receive arms training in anticipation of the next racial holocaust. Lobsinger has attracted thousands of Detroiters to his rallies, and recruited hundreds of members in racially tense neighborhoods. In the event of future disturbances in the Negro areas of the city, Breakthrough's potential for violence is real and menacing.

In Newark, a similar armed vigilante group was formed in the aftermath of racial rioting—the North Ward Citizens Committee, led by a demagog named Anthony Imperiale. The group encourages all members to own firearms and train in their use, and has established squads of armed citizens to patrol the streets at night in cars dubbed "jungle cruisers." The committee has an estimated membership of 1500, at least 1000 of whom belong to a local gun club. Imperiale is also rumored to have established a central cache of arms somewhere in Newark, but he denies the allegation. The committee has been denounced by New Jersey Governor Richard Hughes as a "potential threat to peace and law and order in New Jersey."

With all its constituent organizations, the paramilitary right in America is still numerically small. Including the Klan, the total membership probably amounts to no more than 150,000—and of that number only a minority of zealots will ever be willing to jeopardize their personal security by engaging in overt acts of

violence. But with each new race riot, with every deepening of the bitter divisions between black and white, left and right, young and old, with each new economic convulsion and social upheaval, their numbers and determination will almost certainly grow.

The paramilitary right has no realistic hope of ever seizing power in America—even an America convulsed by racial war. If there is a right-wing take-over, it will almost certainly be validated at the polls, and its leaders will be respectable men of the middle forced to uphold "law and order" by curbing the traditional democratic liberties of freedom of press, speech and assembly. Thus, the Minutemen and their allies are outsiders, and will remain so. But the Minuteman is very much a child of this society, nurtured and shaped by the political demonology and hysterical anti-Communist rhetoric of the Cold War, shadowed through life by the Bomb and squeezed into an increasingly depersonalized, bureaucratic computer world he didn't make and doesn't understand. It is a sociopolitical atmosphere that easily breeds paranoia—and elevates it into a life style. But the implications of the Minuteman mentality transcend paranoia. The Minuteman addresses himself to very real problems—racial chaos, economic unrest and a bloody and inconclusive war in Asia that daily increases national frustration and exacerbates political divisions. His response to these problems may be irrational, violent and vicious, but it is unquestionably a reflection of the extremity of the social crises confronting us. If American cities continue to burn, if our best leaders continue to fall under snipers' bullets, if thousands of young men continue to die—spiritually as well as physically—in nameless rice paddies, the sickness that has spawned the Minutemen will grow in virulence, and may spread throughout society.

Philosopher Daniel Bell has written that ours "is a fragile system. If there is a lesson to be learned from the downfall of democratic government in Italy, Spain, Austria and Germany . . . it is that the crucial turning point comes . . . when political parties or social movements can successfully establish 'private armies' whose resort to violence—street fighting, bombings, the breakup of their opponents' meetings, or simply intimidation—cannot be controlled by the elected authorities, and whose use of violence is justified or made legitimate by the respectable elements in society."

The Minutemen are among the symptoms, not the causes, of the malaise that afflicts America, a mirror in which to view the worst side of our society and ourselves before it's too late—if we care to look.