

MINUTEMEN FORM A POLITICAL PARTY

Plan to Play an Active Role
in the 1968 Elections

By DONALD JANSON

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KANSAS CITY, Mo., July 3—

The ultraconservative Minutemen formally entered the political arena today by founding the Patriotic party.

Robert Bolivar DePugh, 42-year-old national coordinator of the Minutemen, said "several" other "conservative" organizations were observing and participating in the two-day organization meeting.

At a news conference under a red, white and blue banner with the party name alongside a rendering of an American eagle, he introduced only one person representing another group—the Rev. Kenneth Goff of Denver, director of the Soldiers of the Cross.

Mr. Goff said in an interview that his organization was particularly strong in California and that members were supporting Ronald Reagan for the governorship.

To Endorse Candidates

Mr. DePugh said it was too early for the Patriotic party to endorse individuals for office. By 1968, he said, the new organization will be endorsing and running candidates for Congress and state offices.

The dark-haired drug manufacturer from Norborne, Mo., said that members would work this year within the Republican and Democratic parties to gain experience in practical politics. This will be done without disclosing their identity as Minutemen or members of the new Patriotic party, he said.

"We won't identify ourselves because if we did we might not be given the opportunity to serve," he said.

The five-year-old Minutemen organization was formed from groups of secret guerrilla bands who cache arms and train to fight what they predict will be an attempted Communist takeover of the nation. They have had several scrapes with the law over the possession of explosives and other armament. Their national membership is believed to be a few thousand.

Mr. DePugh said the Minutemen had decided that they needed a political as well as "a militant underground arm."

He said:

"Many conservatives feel a common frustration with our present political situation," he said. "The Democrat and Republican parties are simply sections A and B of the pro-Socialist party."

Predicts Fortas Will Run

The current issue of On Target, the Minutemen newsletter, distributed to the 400 persons who gathered at the U-Smile Motel for the organizational meeting, forecast that President Johnson and Justice Abe Fortas of the Supreme Court would form the Democratic Presidential ticket for 1968 and Gov. George Romney of Michigan and Senator Jacob K. Javits of New York would be the Republican opposition.

"No matter which pair are elected," said the publication, "the Communists will win and the patriotic Americans will lose."

Besides Soldiers of the Cross, Mr. De Pugh mentioned the Farmers Liberty League and the Spirit of '76 Committee as having sent observers to today's meeting.

He said the Patriotic party had the support of "many" members of the John Birch Society but not of the organization itself, which "seems to feel we are a competitive influence."

"The whole conservative movement is fishing right now," Mr. Goff said when asked whether a unified effort of all far-right groups was possible.

Mr. De Pugh said the Patriotic party was the logical unifying element because the Minutemen organization had never officially injected itself into politics before and was free of dissensions that divided many conservative groups.

The headquarters of the new party will be at the national Minutemen office in nearby Independence. Mr. De Pugh is its national chairman.