

The Organization, Economics, and Investigation of the Minutemen Terror Group in the 1960's: Race, Religion, and Culture.

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Introduction and Background

Amid the Red Scare the American populace was terrified by a wave of communism that they believed would steal their way of life. Due to this, there was a wave of hyper nationalism that was fueled by fear, religion, and culture. its these factors together led to the creation of the extremist minutemen militia group in the early 1960's. This militia was founded by Robert DePugh based upon anti-communist and nativist ideals which they resorted to membership fees to fund their actions but as they scaled up they enacted insurance fraud and extortion rackets. The Minutemen used these funds to stockpile weapons all over the US in the case of a communist attack or if they believed they must take government into their own hands if it was infiltrated by liberal or communist ideals. They believed there were communist spies everywhere and they must root them out through whatever means necessary. The group at it's origin started as a couple of extremists who believed they were fighting the good fight but, through the use of extensive propaganda such as DePugh's monthly magazine "On Target" their members grew significantly. When weapons and evidence of arms trafficking were discovered, the FBI launched a full-scale investigation that revealed a command and organizational structure far beyond what they could have imagined. All the research on the poster was obtained through archived FBI documents on their investigation of the Minutemen. This project explores the organization, economics, and investigation of the minutemen terror group in the 1950's and how their creation was influenced by race, religion, and culture.

Robert DePugh following a bail jumping hearing in 1969



Findings

The findings were extensive and found that the minutemen had spread to become a nation-wide organization, headquartered in Missouri. This central organizational structure that monitored the numerous cells of the Minutemen was able to spread their propaganda, provide training for new recruits, and fund the extensive structure behind the Minutemen. Their influence had spread potentially into police departments, college campuses, and maybe even government. This is significant due to the time that they operated overlapping with the start of the civil rights movements and a nation-wide red scare in the United States. So far, we have come to an early understanding of the militant, survivalist nature of the organization and its members in addition to a pattern of financial dubiousness expressed by its leadership. The implications of these results suggest how a sort of doomsday-prepper mentality in the face of national uproar can leave citizens vulnerable to the propagandistic efforts of self-proclaimed "revolutionaries". We saw this led to national crime, upheaval, conspiracy, and potential financial loss. We have come to deeply understand this organization with emphasis on its domestic roots and how that influences its relationship with law enforcement which may help us understand similar future structures. From 1963-1969 the Minutemen spread their anti-communist and nationalist rhetoric all over the United States and were finally brought down by the FBI due to their involvement with weapons trafficking, extortion, and violent plans for extremist acts.

Robert DePugh at one of the Minutemen training camps



Discussion and conclusion.

There is boundless more information regarding these borderline terror religion based extremist groups and there is extreme potential for psychological research on the intersection between religious extremism and hyper nationalist behavior. There is quantitative difficulties for this kind of research because it is very detailed behavioral analysis and investigation so, it is difficult to paint a picture of a larger pattern without extremely thorough investigation as many extremist groups with roots in hyper nationalism and religion in this time period as possible. Overall, there was thousands of pages of FBI documents that were available to comb through so, there is extensive work to be done before this could be named conclusive but, the information and patterns that were discovered can help the world understand the origin of religious, anti-communist, or nationalist extremist groups that are now common in our modern landscape.

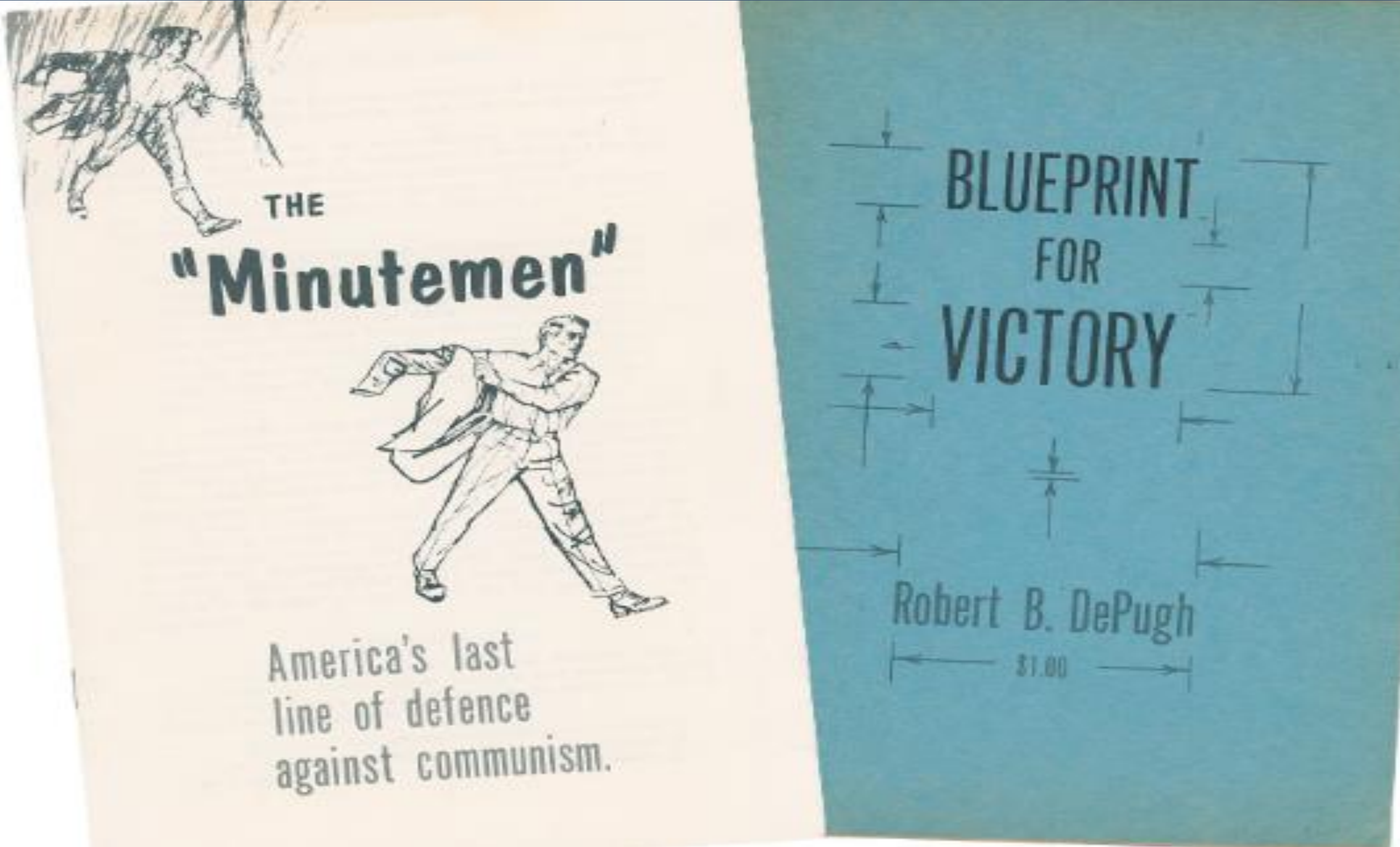
Copy of DePugh's newspaper Minutemen Propaganda "On Target"



Methods

In order to research the Minutemen, we used a freedom of information request to collect all of the files the FBI had about the minutemen and their investigation. Once we obtained all these files, we split them into 6 sections and analyzed them by serial number. We obtained all the important information from all of the files while looking for patterns in propaganda, crimes, economics, and investigative tactics. Additionally, the study conducted put emphasis on looking for the influence of race, religion, and culture on the creation of this group and how these things helped develop their extremist ideologies. Through these documents we were able to find out that this terror group had a centralized organizational system that managed the cells and sent out propaganda or training schedules. As such, we shifted our focus towards researching how they funded, recruited for, and managed the numerous cells across the nation. Overall, our main method of research was mass analyzation of raw information within FBI documents pertaining to the minutemen and finding patterns in organization, crimes, ideologies, and the influence of race, religion, and culture on it's origin.

Robert DePugh propaganda literature for Minutemen recruitment



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Federal Bureau of Investigation HQ file number 62-107261, Subject: Minutemen.