

## Vigilantes Updated

**The Minutemen**, by J. Harry Jones, Jr. (Doubleday, 426 pp. \$6.95), reports on the ultra-Rightist paramilitary organization that stockpiles explosives in refrigerators and suggests putting cyanide in the U.N. air-conditioning system. Edwin M. Yoder, Jr., is associate editor of the Greensboro (N.C.) Daily News.

By EDWIN M. YODER, JR.

WHEN HARRY JONES of the Kansas City *Star* concluded in the epilogue to this book with a statement that "the Minutemen story is incomplete," he was prophetic. Early last month six heavily armed Connecticut Minutemen raided a pacifist training center near Voluntown.

Two years earlier, in a nationally headlined incident, New York police had aborted a similar plot when they arrested twenty Minutemen and confiscated enough deadly weapons and explosives for a small war. Among the New York *dramatis personae* the police found a "twenty-nine-year-old milkman" who had "stored explosives in his refrigerator" and "a balding forty-year-old . . . advertising copywriter" with two *howitzers* on his front porch and three mortars (for good measure) inside.

Who are these curious vigilantes, and who their quarry? The questions became Mr. Jones's concern about four years ago because Norborne, Missouri, home town of Minutemen founder Robert Bolivar DePugh, was in his newspaper's circulation area. Mr. Jones's extensive work on that beat has yielded this informative if ill-organized and somewhat inconclusive report. But *The Minutemen* has an undoubted documentary value, and the author has written with admirable dispassion about this bizarre phenomenon. Mr. Jones shuns labels like "oddball" and "kook" because, he writes, "the use of such words . . . has led the public to oversimplify its conclusions."

No doubt. The author might equally well have said that in Mr. DePugh's case a brief biography renders epithets superfluous. The founder of the Minutemen left the U.S. Army in 1944 with a medical discharge for "psychoneurosis, mixed type, severe, manifested by anxiety and depressive features and schizoid personality." He studied briefly at Kansas State University in 1946, where he organized the "Society for the Advancement of Canine Genetics." After a nonpolitical interval in the Fifties, Robert DePugh enlisted in the John Birch Society, but he was too pushy for the tastes of its one-man directorate and was excommunicated in 1964. The Milquetoast paranoia of the Birch Society

seems to have whetted DePugh's appetite for stronger stuff, hence his founding of the Minutemen in 1961.

Centered initially in Missouri and California, this sect of paramilitary vigilantes batted on bad publicity. Their martial drills, their strange nocturnal prowls with bows and arrows, their cult of Flemingsque secrecy (like 007, each agent has a number), and their candid espousal of armed violence made them something new on the political landscape. Within a year they had the good luck to be put under investigation by two governors, denounced as a threat to freedom by President Kennedy, and deplored by Senator Javits.

Their doctrine, I gather, is standard ultra-Rightist with minor schismatic variations: *i. e.*, the Communist threat is largely internal and is in near control of the Presidency, the press, the schools, the churches, and the courts—all the Establishment agencies now hounded for different reasons by the far Left. Might they not then be put down as another illustration of what Professor Hofstadter calls "the paranoid style in American politics"?

**P**ERHAPS. Except that to the paranoid style they add a cult of explicit violence. They stockpile and conceal weapons against the "day" when they will fall upon "Communists" in high places. As the Queens and Voluntown incidents suggest, they claim the right to discipline summarily the imagined political heresy of innocent neighbors. Their publications have threatened some Congressmen with "crosshairs on the neck" for voting against appropriations for the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Others have noised about crackbrained schemes for putting cyanide gas in the United Nations air-conditioning system.

No one knows how many of them there are, or how seriously their weird threats are to be taken. J. Edgar Hoover's current estimate is 500; Mr. Jones believes the number may be larger. Like all extremists of Right or Left they pose a vexing problem for a society dedicated to its own safety and to civil liberties. But society is not without resort. The Federal Firearms Act ensnared Mr. DePugh (who has recently gone "underground," with a four-year federal prison sentence awaiting him) and two of his lieutenants. Perhaps we are not powerless to distinguish between freedom to associate and the utterly imaginary "right" to carry bazookas and terrorize law-abiding citizens whose politics these hearties find objectionable. Those who doubt the efficacy of stronger federal gun laws might consider their potential here: they would leave the Minutemen to choose between uncovering their illicit arms caches or risking prosecution for failure to do so.

## Game of Abandon

**Instant Replay: The Green Bay Diary of Jerry Kramer**, edited by Dick Schaap (NAL/World, 286 pp. \$5.95), details the day-to-day life of a professional football player. SR's Associate Publisher Richard L. Tobin once covered sports for the New York *Herald Tribune*.

By RICHARD L. TOBIN

JERRY KRAMER IS, OF COURSE, the great offensive guard on the Green Bay Packers who threw a gorgeous block on Jethro Pugh late last December to defeat the Dallas Cowboys 21-17 in the icebox of northern Wisconsin. At 15° below zero Green Bay had won the championship of the National Football League for the third straight year. Now the talented Mr. Kramer has put into words the true inside story of what it was like to be a Packer under Vincent Lombardi, the greatest coach of the best football team in the world. Like *Paper Lion*, *Instant Replay* is one of those exciting sleepers, a truly pre-eminent sports book; it places Jerry Kramer in the rarefied company of George Plimpton. Those who liked *Paper Lion* (and they are by now well into seven figures) will find *Instant Replay* precisely their dish of tea.

Lombardi is always with you here, tough, shouting against laziness and stupidity, hating the prejudice that Negro athletes face in public accommodations, insisting that all his players enter and leave by the back door when a hotel in the South decrees that Negroes must do so. Lombardi doesn't care what color a man is as long as he can play football.



—From the book.

Jerry Kramer—writes with "unbelievable sensitivity."

and all the Green Bay Packers feel the same way. ("You serve colored people?" a teammate asks Max McGee, the great end, who has just opened a restaurant. "Sure," Max replies. "How do you like them cooked?")

Lombardi has the world's highest threshold of pain—for anybody who plays for him. His lungs keep going all day long. Here he is talking to the veteran backs: "This is a game of abandon and you run with complete abandon. You care nothing for anybody or anything, and when you get close to the goal line your abandon is intensified. Nothing, not a tank, not a wall, not a dozen men can stop you from getting across that goal line. If I ever see one of my backs get stopped a yard from the goal line I'll come off that bench and kick him right in the can."

**B**UT Lombardi is gentle with rookies, knowing they cannot take it the way his veterans can. "Some of you boys are having trouble picking up your assignments. It's a tough task. You got so many plays to learn, so many moves to learn. If you make a mistake, if you drop a pass or miss a block, anything like that, hell, forget it. If we had a defensive back here who felt bad every time he got beat at a pass pattern, he wouldn't be worth a damn. Take an education, but don't dwell on it. Don't let it affect your play. You will drop passes. You will make mistakes." Then he adds, characteristically, "But not very many if you want to play for the Green Bay Packers."

Lombardi is truly happy about few things in this world, and most of them are winning football games. But after the fantastic victory over Dallas for the N.F.L. title, Jerry Kramer, the blocking hero on Bart Starr's winning plunge, told 50,000,000 Americans over the TV cameras: "Many things have been said about Coach and he is not always understood by those who quote him. But the players understand. This is one beautiful man." Kramer went on to say that no one who ever played for Lombardi speaks of him afterward with anything but respect and admiration and affection. His driving, his whipping, his cussing, his disregard of his players' injuries all fade, and his good qualities endure. Again characteristically, Lombardi came quietly over to Kramer a few days after the great victory and told him privately: "I want to thank you for the things you said on television. I have had a lot of calls about it. A lot of people have commented on it. It was a wonderful thing to say in front of 50,000,000 people." This is part of Lombardi, too, though a little-known part.

The marvel of this book is that it is written with unbelievable sensitivity by a 255-pound monster who from July to January takes physical punishment un-

known in any other sport except, perhaps, professional ice hockey. Like *Paper Lion*, *Instant Replay* is the McCoy. Though not quite as well written or as full of humor as Plimpton's masterpiece, it contains infinitely more inside information, because Kramer is a seasoned football pro where George Plimpton was only a paper Lion. If locker-room prayers and high emotion seem childish in the violent and hyperdramatic context of pro football, that is the way it is, and you believe it with all your heart by the end of this relatively brief encounter with Mr. Kramer's telling prose.

Sports books are the most difficult form of nonfiction; our knowledge of how the game came out takes the edge off the suspense. Jerry Kramer's virtue is that in his story the outcome doesn't matter. It's the details of a pro footballer's life that hold the reader.

Kramer went through twenty-two operations ("not always cheerfully"), most of them major and for suspected cancer, some a result of football injuries; and he was once given up for dead. His teammates call him "Zipper" because he has scars from the top of his head to his anklebones. Three times he was told he would never play football again, but he always kept coming back. That he came back to finish the 1967 season at the ripe pro-football age of thirty-one and, finishing it in triumph, kept up his daily diary is our great good fortune. I have never read a more authentic account of what it's like to live a major sport. I doubt if anyone else has, either.

## Uneasy Journey to Social Concern

*Lyrical and Critical Essays*, by Albert Camus, translated from the French by Ellen Conroy Kennedy, edited by Philip Thody (Knopf, 365 pp. \$6.95), a collection of the author's early work, displays the paradoxes inherent in a self-conscious attempt to exalt a way of life whose strength is its unself-consciousness. J. W. Burrow, a British historian of ideas, has a special interest in the history of social thought.

By J. W. BURROW

WHEN ALBERT CAMUS died in a motor accident in 1960 at the age of forty-six, he had already established himself as one of the major writers of the mid-twentieth century, a philosopher-novelist of a stature and influence comparable to that of Jean-Paul Sartre, with whom, to the annoyance of both, his name was frequently associated. But Camus was not only a popular writer and a highly important one; he was also often profoundly misunderstood.

On account of his book *The Myth of Sisyphus* he was called an existentialist, though the book was in fact a criticism of various existentialist philosophies. His later long essay *The Rebel* popularized the cult of "revolt" as the cardinal virtue, but Camus's argument was essentially on behalf of moderation. The revolt he spoke of was one in the name of jus-



"It's some intellectual group, but nobody can figure out what they want."