

FBI Probes States Rights Party

By Jack Nelson
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ATLANTA, — The violently racist and antisemitic National States Rights Party has been recruiting tough Ku Klux Klansmen in the Meridian, Miss., area where a wave of violence has terrorized Negro and Jewish families.

The activities of the hate organization, some of whose members have been linked to racial violence in the past, have made it a prime target of an intensive FBI investigation into the violence.

The FBI has evidence indicating that some of the same people responsible for the bombing of a synagogue and a rabbi's house in Jackson, Miss., last November also are involved in the Meridian violence.

No arrests have been made in any of the cases. Rewards for information leading to arrest and conviction of those responsible now total \$95,000—\$50,000 in Jackson and \$35,000 in Meridian.

In a telephone interview from NSRP headquarters in Savannah, Ga., vice chairman J. B. Stoner said he was not

surprised the FBI was investigating the party "because they've been after me trying to cause me trouble ever since I was 16 years old and I'm 44 years old now."

Stoner accused the FBI of harassing him on many occasions. He said agents had tried without success to link him to several bombings, including one which killed four Negro girls in a Birmingham, Ala., church in 1963.

Stoner denied any part in the Meridian violence and said he will proceed with plans for three days of rallies and "white power" marches.

His Meridian organizer is Raymond Robert, 28, a Klansman who has espoused the cause of the American Nazi Party. He is a brother of Alton Wayne Roberts, one of seven members of the White Knights of Ku Klux Klan who last November were convicted in Federal court in Meridian in a civil rights conspiracy case growing out of the 1964 Neshoba lynching of three civil rights workers. Mrs. Alton

Wayne Roberts is local secretary of the NSRP unit.

Stoner said he also plans to speak at a rally in Brandon, near Jackson, sponsored by the Americans for the Preservation of the White Race, a group comprised of many former White Knights and other violence-prone racists. "Everybody on the white side has been invited to participate," Stoner said, "the Minutemen, the American Independent Party, the White Citizens Council, the John Birch Society, the Women for Constitutional Government, and numerous others."

The FBI is not the only agency interested in the NSRP's activities. Meridian Police Chief C. L. (Roy) Gunn and State investigators also have been keeping close watch on the group.

"We're hoping the \$35,000 reward money (\$10,000 by the city and \$25,000 by a group of Meridian businessmen) will bring us a break," Chief Gunn said.

Gunn said there have been about ten incidents of racial violence in the area since the

Federal court trial of the Neshoba lynching case. They include the burning of five Negro churches and a Negro parsonage and a shooting attack on the home of a teacher of a Head Start class.

Gunn pledged to stop the violence with any force necessary and said, "if we catch them in the act we will apprehend them, and we will shoot to kill if required."

It was the synagogue bombing that brought forth the reward money in Meridian. There are only about 42 Jewish families in the city of 55,000. There has been little civil rights activity among them, but the synagogue's rabbi, Milton Schlager, is a member of the Committee of Concern, a local group comprised mostly of clergymen who are raising funds to rebuild the Negro churches that were burned.

The bombing also brought a visit from Gov. John Bell Williams, a segregationist who was severely criticized by some white civil rights leaders in Mississippi for failing to

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strongly denounce the Jackson bombing. Williams, who inspected the extensive damage at the synagogue, Temple Beth Israel, deplored the violence and pledged to provide as many state agents as the investigation requires.

Stoner was addressing a small group at an NSRP meeting in a barber shop across the street from the Meridian Federal courthouse on the night of April 4 when he heard that the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had been assassinated a few hours earlier in Memphis. "He's been a good nigger since then," said Stoner, interrupting a two and one-half hour tirade against

Negroes, Jews and the FBI.

Although the FBI has repeatedly linked Stoner to persons charged with bombings and other racial violence, it is true, as he frequently boasts, that they have never been able to bring charges against him.

"But the Federal Bums of Integration have been harassing me off and on and when the National States Rights Party comes to power we're going to

try them all for treason and hang them. Without the FBI there wouldn't be any integration in the South in my opinion. Enforcement has brought it about."