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THUNDERBOLT IN A STORM

Segregationist Fights On

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By PAUL HOPE
Star Staff Writer

BIRMINGHAM, Ala., Sept. 20.—Edward R. Fields is a "thunderbolt" in Birmingham's racial storm.

He is the kingpin of the National States Rights Party which has its headquarters here. He has been a principal figure in anti-integration demonstrations.

His insignia is a jagged thunderbolt.

Mr. Fields' headquarters is a rented stone bungalow in a residential-commercial area on the outskirts of Birmingham, not far from the steel mills which are the city's biggest source of employment.

At the entrance to the cluttered bungalow hangs a huge Confederate flag which nearly blocks the passageway.

Just inside the door is a desk piled with small Confederate flags, big Confederate flags, rebel caps and quantities of anti-Negro, anti-Jewish literature and copies of the Thunderbolt, newspaper of his party.

Behind the desk is Mr. Fields, wavy-haired, of medium build, rather handsome, a 30-year-old ex-chiropractor.

To him the answer to the race problem is to send Negroes back to Africa. The Jews he would send to Israel.

Protege of Talmadge

Mr. Fields, who cut his political teeth as a high school boy passing out literature in the Georgia campaigns of the late, gallus-snapping Gene Talmadge, thinks President Kennedy and the Negro integration drive will meet their Waterloo in Alabama.

His anti-integration activities of the past two weeks are getting a goingover by a Federal grand jury investigating obstruction to court-ordered

school integration. Mr. Fields said he expects to be indicted.

He says the Sunday bombing which killed four Negro children has been a setback to his anti-integration efforts.

Mr. Fields' biggest fear at the moment is that white people will settle down to an integrated school routine and it will be hard to get them out of it.

Private School Plan Pushed

His group and an organization of white parents, he said, are trying to find a building within a few days in which to establish a private school. This, he thinks, would give the white parents a "focal point" around which they could rally.

To many city officials who are trying to keep the peace, and perhaps even to a majority of Birmingham residents, Mr. Fields and his little coterie of hired helpers are rowdies.

Two persons who said they have been active in the organization were arrested after scuffling with police during anti-integration demonstrations at the schools.

But last week, when the protest demonstrations were going strong, hundreds of out-of-school white students and segregationist adults were pouring through the party's headquarters on Bessemer road.

Confederate flags were selling like hotcakes. Two boys who later were charged with shooting a Negro stopped by last Sunday and bought a 40-cent one, police said.

Mr. Fields wants no part of Senator Goldwater, whose grandfather was Jewish. A complete issue of the Thunderbolt is devoted to blasting Senator Goldwater.

Among the literature distributed by the organization is a reprint of a 1934 issue of Der Sturmer, a Jew-baiting Nazi publication edited by Julius

Streicher, who was hanged for war crimes. The Thunderbolt describes Streicher as the "greatest anti-Jewish patriot of this century."

But Mr. Fields calls the America Nazi Party leader George Lincoln Rockwell, a "scoundrel" and a "publicity seeker."

"We're trying to build a mass movement; he's trying to build a tiny cult," Mr. Fields said.

Mr. Fields said his group is "friendly with" the Ku Klux Klan. He said there is a good deal of overlapping of membership among the Klan, his party, the White Citizens Council and the John Birch Society unit in the Birmingham area.

Mr. Fields was born in Georgia. He went to a college in Davenport, Iowa, where he was active in rightist organizations. He said he was practicing chiropractor in Louisville, Ky., and put out Thunderbolt newsletter as sideline until a Birmingham man whom he declined to identify offered financial help to the movement if he came here.

Party Active in 38 States

The National States Rights Party, which he said is active in 38 States, was organized in 1958. A Knoxville (Tenn.) man is listed as chairman at a Little Rock (Ark.) woman vice chairman. Mr. Fields lists himself as information director.

Yesterday things were quiet at the party headquarters. Ten students from a nearby school stopped by to buy a big Confederate flag, the \$6 variety.

"How are things out at your school?" asked Mr. Fields. "Pretty quiet," was the response.

As they left the headquarters one with the flag tucked under his arm, Mr. Fields called after them:

"Keep in touch."