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MISC II - KKK

Klan Radio Ads Seek Public Support

By WAYNE KING
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BATON ROUGE, La., Nov. 18—David E. Duke, the 25-year-old national director of the revitalized Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, listened intently as the WLCS disk jockey, Terry Collins, barked the new Klan commercial into the microphone in the taping studio last week.

"Today the white majority is enduring the butt of discrimination...We're the ones who pay most of the taxes and enjoy less and less of their benefits...Thousands of organizations work for the special interests of minorities...Give them a little competition...Come to a huge rally of the Ku Klux Klan...Hear David Duke, the dynamic and articulate young leader of the Ku Klux Klan... Enjoy the great Anthony Brothers Band...See the beautiful cross lighting ceremony..."

As the background music—Charlie Daniels singing "The South's Gonna Do It Again"—swelled up to a finale, Mr. Duke smiled broadly and said, "That's it, it's fine; we'll roll that one."

Mr. Duke had written the ad, selected the music, picked the time spots ("We'll roll it 50 times in 10 days, 20 spots in drive time, nothing before 6:30, nothing after 10, build up toward the end...") and supervised the taping.

It is all part of the new, cleaned-up image he is trying to impart to the Klan—sophisticated, college educated, media oriented, the man in the gray flannel bedsheet.

Mr. Duke also represents the cutting edge of what appears to be a new respectability for radical racism, apparent in an increase in Klan membership, but more dramatically in growing support for Klan views among the white general public.

This month, campaigning openly as national director of the Ku Klux Klan and Grand Dragon (state leader) of the Louisiana Realm, Mr. Duke polled 11,079 votes in a race for the State Senate, a third of those cast, against an incumbent conservative who himself pledged resistance to gun control, busing for school integration and to a proposed merger of predominantly white Louisiana State University with predominantly black Southern University.

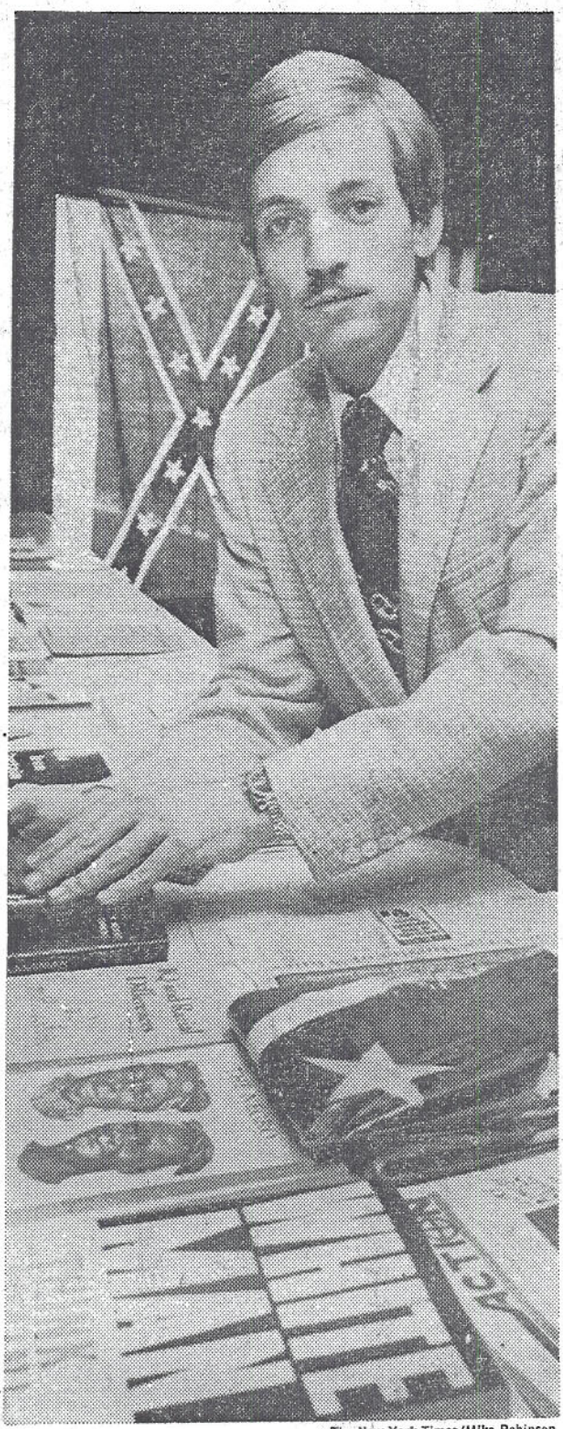
A similar indicator is the growth of political support for J.B. Stoner of Marietta, Ga., head of the National States Rights Party and publisher of the virulently racist newspaper, The Thunderbolt.

Mr. Stoner identifies himself publicly as "a white racist."

Ran for Governor

When Mr. Stoner ran for Governor of Georgia in 1970, he received 17,600 votes, or 2.2 percent of those cast. In 1972, running for the Senate, he received 40,600 votes, or 5.7 percent. In 1974, running for Lieutenant Governor, he received 71,000 or just under 9 percent.

Voters, Mr. Duke said, "are



The New York Times/Mike Robinson

David E. Duke, national director of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, at Baton Rouge, La., headquarters.

just about ready for us. During the campaign, he leaned heavily on the slogan, "Give the majority a real voice." Another, borrowed from Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama, whose certificate making Mr. Duke an honorary colonel in the state militia adorns the Klan leader's wall was, "Send them a message."

"The people who voted were not ignorant rednecks," Mr. Duke said. "They're well educated, a median of 14 years of school, middle and upper middle income. This district represents the new potential for Klan membership."

The size of Klan membership at present is highly debatable. To begin with, there are 14 to 16 separate Klan groups in existence in the country today, each with its own membership and hierarchy.

Large Decline

Clearly, the membership is minuscule compared to the 1920's, when the Invisible Empire boasted 4 million to 6 million members and sympathizers, including officeholders from county judges and sheriffs to governors.

The three largest Klan groups are the United Klans of America, headed by Imperial Wizard Robert Shelton of Tuscaloosa, Ala., James Venable's National Klan and Mr. Duke's organization, which he took over about a year ago not long before the death of its former leader, Edward White of Tennessee.

Since then, a Klansman named Bill Wilkinson has split from Mr. Duke and started his own Klan. Five other Klansmen, led by Dale Reusch, formerly of Mr. Venable's National Klan, have also formed a new Knights of the Klu Klux Klan, with Mr. Reusch as imperial wizard.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation reports that the Klan, for all practical purposes, disappeared after it was disbanded in 1944, but that it reorganized in 1954, after the Supreme Court school desegregation decision, then quickly gained 14,000 adherents. By 1972, these had dwindled to 2,000, and by 1974 to 1,500.

Now, however, the F.B.I. estimates there are 2,200 members — a figure that, while it reflects an increase, is probably too low, based on observation of recent Klan activity.

New Headquarters

Mr. Duke's Klan, for example, has just opened a $350-a-month headquarters on the highway outside Baton Rouge, complete with a red and white 50-foot banner across the front proclaiming "Knights of the Ku Klux Klan."

His organizational ads run on four radio stations in Baton Rouge — he spent over $1,000 promoting an upcoming rally, discounted by 15 percent because he runs his own advertising agency — and two small classified ads run continuously in two local newspapers, competing with those run by his rival, Mr. Wilkinson.

He says he has taken an oath not to reveal membership figures, but describes a guess of 3,000 as "too low."

"We have two rallies a weekend somewhere in the country," he says, "and we've had as many as 2,700 at one rally. They were not all members, but that should give you some idea. We also put out a newspaper and do our own printing."

A Baton Rouge newsman who attended the rally Mr. Duke referred to said other estimates put the crowd at closer to 1,000.

Recently Mr. Duke has taken for the Klan a low profile in his public commercials, talking about "preserving the white culture, traditions and heritage."

"This is a new Klan," he said in an interview, "new leadership, new membership. We're at least as intelligent and educated as, say, the Communists, who are known for their education."

At rallies, besides the "cross-lighting" — Mr. Duke says "cross-burning" is a crudity invented by the media—and a racial pep talk, there is often a rock and pop concert and a guest speaker—such as a jockey, Mary Bacon, who told the crowd at one rally: "We're not the illiterate nigger killers [the news media] make us out to be. Maybe if your wife or sister is raped by a nigger, you'll join the Klan."

Mr. Duke was also less subtle at that rally. The Klan, he said, goes further than Patrick Henry:

"We say give us liberty and give them death. There's many times I've felt like picking up a gun and going shooting a nigger.

"We've got a heritage to protect. We're going to do everything to protect our race."

Paper's Features

The Klan publication, The Crusader, edited by Mr. Duke, features articles arguing the inferiority of blacks, "cartoons" depicting such things as white children bused into schools filled with knife-wielding, gun-carrying blacks, and advertisements for such items as tear gas "Negro control equipment—will drop the biggest buck in his tracks," and a "hatenanny" tape recording of "Odis Cochran and the Three Bigots" singing "Ship Those Niggers Back," along with other selections.

"The first time I heard Dave Duke speak was in South Boston," said Dave Wagner, a young Klansman from Boston who was at the new headquarters outside Baton Rouge. "It was pretty impressive. I decided to put my shoulder to the wheel.

"I see this as a political party. I wouldn't have joined the old Klan. Forget all that night riding and all that. We'd be broken up in a week."

Outside, under a counter carrying such tracts as "Bolshevism Is Jewish," "The Jews and Their Lies," "A Jew Exposes the Jewish World Conspiracy," "Positive Christianity in the Third Reich," and "Great Achievements of the Negro Race"—16 blank pages—is a loaded chrome plated .357 magnum revolver and a doubled-barreled shotgun with a cartridge belt draped around it.

"For hunting?" one of the Klansmen was asked.

"Maybe blackbirds," he replied with a big smile.