

# David Duke: Promoter of "White Rights"

by Judy Bolton

Judy Bolton is a member of the Research and Evaluation Department of the Anti-Defamation League's Civil Rights Division.

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Has David Duke really hung out his KKK sheet to dry? The 36-year-old former Imperial Wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (KKKK) and founder-president of the National Association for the Advancement of White People (NAAWP) claims that he has recently announced his intention to seek the Democratic Presidential nomination in 1988.

A long-time racist and anti-Semitic agitator, Duke was instrumental in the Klan resurgence of the 1970s and continues to propagandize white supremacist positions through the NAAWP, an organization that is, in effect, a Klan without the robes.

Last January, during the Forsyth County, GA, integration demonstrations, Duke was arrested (along with Frank Shirley, a member of Glenn Miller's North Carolina-based White Patriot Party, and Don Black, Duke's successor as KKKK Imperial Wizard) for reckless conduct and illegally blocking a state highway after a screaming confrontation with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation.

In an attempt to capitalize on the aftermath of a December 1986 racial incident in Howard Beach, Duke visited New York City in February as a "white rights" activist. Newsday described him as "All dressed up, [but with] nowhere to go." The article reported that Duke's visit attracted little attention and that he was unable to set up a meeting he sought with Mayor Edward I. Koch or develop any other publicity for his cause.

Duke first came to public attention in the mid-1970s after launching a publicity blitz that not only boosted membership in his Knights of the Ku Klux Klan but somewhat demystified Klan ritual. His public campaign began at the grass roots level as he urged Klansmen to "get out of the cow pasture and into hotel meeting rooms." Following his own advice, Duke got himself on network television, appearing on programs with Tom Snyder and Barbara Walters as he articulated his subtle brand of racism. Duke skillfully exploited legitimate issues such as illegal immigration, affirmative action and forced busing. This new breed of Imperial Wizard also upgraded Klan vocabulary by renaming himself "national director" and referring to cross burnings as "illuminations."

David Duke's preoccupation with racist ideology dates back to his youth. At 17, he became active in right wing extremist groups. While attending Louisiana State University, he pursued his avid interest in white supremacy, anti-Semitism and Nazi history and founded the White Youth Alliance, a group affiliated with the neo-Nazi National Socialist White People's Party of Arlington, VA. To protest a speech by activist attorney William Kunstler at Tulane University, Duke marched wearing a Nazi brown shirt and a swastika armband and carrying a placard that said "Gas the Chicago 7." Duke described the stunt as "guerrilla theatre" and termed it "neat."

Shortly after graduating in 1974, Duke exchanged his swastika for a Klan robe and founded Louisiana's Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. As self-appointed Wizard, he cultivated a clean-cut, articulate image which served him well in promoting the Klan and its rituals. For the first time in Klan history, women were accepted as equal members. Catholics, traditionally barred, were encouraged to apply for membership.

Duke professed nonviolence and encouraged members to become politically active. In 1975, he received one-third of the votes cast for a seat in the Louisiana State Senate. His moderate-sounding approach to racism attracted audiences; his relative sophistication allowed him to couch his bigotry in pseudo-scientific and sociological terms. Duke articulated his racism in a slick manner that led journalists to describe it as "rhinestone racism" and "buttom down terror."

In 1975, he organized the largest Klan rally the nation had witnessed since the 1960s — in Walker, LA, with an estimated attendance of 2,700. He also built up local organizations in other states including California, Florida and Texas. Although he publicly shunned violence, he was convicted in 1979 of inciting to riot in connection with a Klan rally in suburban New

Orleans. In the late 1970s, his Knights sought to establish Klan cells in military camps and bases. After a violent racial disturbance at Camp Pendleton, CA, in 1976, it was found that a group of white Marines were members of Duke's Knights of the KKK and were actively recruiting new members. In June 1979, a large Klan unit was uncovered at Fort Hood, TX.

Following the racial violence at Camp Pendleton, the 18 Marines involved were transferred. The American Civil Liberties Union filed a suit on behalf of the Marines, claiming that the transfer violated their right of association. The incident prompted the Anti-Defamation League to call for a Congressional investigation of extremist groups operating in the United States military. ADL also expressed the same concern to the Defense Department, which, in response, organized a number of programs for military personnel to counter racist activity and promulgated restrictions regarding off-base participation in Klan and other racially-motivated rallies.

Duke's group pursued additional organizing efforts, including the active recruitment of high school students in a number of cities to form a "Klan Youth Corps." The KKKK operated the racist "Patriotic Press" in Metairie, LA.

In 1980, Duke's days as a Klan leader ended abruptly. Bill Wilkinson, who had left Duke's organization five years earlier to form the Invisible Empire in Louisiana, told the press that he had forced Duke's resignation from the Knights of the KKK by secretly videotaping a meeting during which Duke offered to sell Wilkinson his membership lists for \$35,000. Duke denied the incident but left the Klan soon after to establish the NAAWP, which he described as "primarily a white rights lobby organization, a racist movement, mainly middle class people. We do not have ritual. We do not have oaths."

The "NAAWP News" regularly carries advertisements for neo-Nazi literature and anti-Semitic films. Since forming the NAAWP, Duke has continued to promote bigotry. A recent issue of "NAAWP News" proclaimed "Victory in Forsyth County" and condemned the "vicious anti-white propaganda that has emerged from the Howard Beach incident."

In a January 1987 letter circulated with the "NAAWP News", Duke claimed that the NAAWP had grown 32 percent in membership and an "incredible" 72 percent in subscriptions the previous year but cited no actual figures.

In the same letter Duke asserted that he had recently attended a special six-week university program in Salzburg, Austria, and claimed that he traveled through Europe meeting "hundreds of white activists, many of whom are NAAWP members and supporters." Duke boasted that he received extensive publicity which included "dozens of radio and magazine interviews" as well as speaking engagements. In the report of his trip he claimed to have personally met and interviewed Kurt Waldheim. In reality, Duke was simply a part of a legitimate educational group received by Waldheim.

Duke has been receiving steady coverage in "Spotlight", a weekly publication of Liberty Lobby, the Washington-based anti-Semitic propaganda apparatus, in connection with the Forsyth County events and his bid for the Presidency. The May 25, 1987, issue of "Spotlight" profiled him as a serious contender for the Presidency in the paper's "Race for the White House" series. Duke's racist activities, including his Klan involvement, were acknowledged in the profile which quoted Duke supporters as saying he "has the potential of becoming the modern-day George Wallace."

On June 9, 1987, on the steps of the Georgia State Capitol, Duke announced that he would seek the 1988 Democratic Presidential nomination. Among those present were Daniel Carver, Grand Dragon of The Invisible Empire, KKK; Sam Dickson, Duke's attorney; Ed Fields of the White Supremacist National States Rights Party of Marietta, GA, and Don Black, Duke's successor in the KKKK.

The man "Spotlight" describes as "America's most renowned 'white rights' advocate" tried to run as Democrat for the Presidency in 1980 but his campaign never materialized due to lack of any significant support.

Although David Duke has faded in and out of the media's limelight, his notoriety among white supremacists is unwavering and his candidacy for the Presidency may again vault him into the public arena.

# Extremists In High Places: Where Do They Find These People?

by David Kusnet

Former Education Secretary Terrel Bell made headlines recently when he revealed he had often heard "mid-level right-wing staffers" in the Reagan Administration make racial slurs.

Bell's revelations, contained in a soon-to-be-published book on his four years as a cabinet secretary, came as no surprise to students of the Far Right's influence over the Administration.

Virtually every administration has its share of incompetents or worse. However, his Administration has appointed a remarkable number of ideological extremists — some of whose records are so embarrassing that they have been forced to resign or have been denied confirmation by the Senate.

For instance:

- In 1985, the Administration appointed Marianne Mele Hall to the \$70,000-a-year position as head of the Copyright Royalty Tribunal. She resigned after it was revealed she had helped write a book which said Blacks "insist on preserving their jungle freedoms, their women, their avoidance of personal responsibility and their abhorrence of the work ethic."

- Anthony Bouscaren, a 1986 appointee to the National Council on the Humanities, had worked for Pioneer Fund, an organization which has sought to prove that Blacks are genetically inferior to Whites. Bouscaren's nomination was rejected by the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee.

- Recently, the committee rejected another nominee to the National Council on the Humanities, Charles Moser, who had been active in efforts to ban public school textbooks in West Virginia.

- Another controversial nominee was Warren Richardson, named in 1981 as assistant secretary of Health and Human Services. Richardson had been general counsel for the Far Right group Liberty Lobby, which has called the Nazi Holocaust a Jewish hoax. Richardson asked that his nomination be withdrawn.

- Carolyn Sundseth, who served as the Administration's liaison to most religious groups, declared members of the President's staff should "get saved or get out" — a remark suggesting that only those who share her religious beliefs should serve in government.

- The head of the Education Department's Denver office, Thomas Tancredo, mailed a speech at government expense declaring that the United States was once a "Christian nation" but has been taken over by "Godlessness."

- A special assistant in the Education Department, Eileen Gardner, resigned during a controversy over her view that federal aid to the handicapped is "misguided" because, if people are disabled, "it was not a cruel act of fate . . . it's from God." Gardner had written in a draft position paper for the Heritage Foundation that physical handicaps reflect people's "level of internal spiritual development."

- Herbert Ellingwood, who served as chairman of the Merit Systems Protection Board from 1981 through 1985, worked with a "talent bank" to place conservative fundamentalists in federal jobs — a questionable activity for an official entrusted with protecting the integrity of the federal civil service system. Ellingwood's name was floated for head of the Justice Department's Office of Legal Policy, which screens nominees for federal judgeships, but, following a public outcry, Attorney General Meese decided not to appoint him.

Examining the records of these and similar appointees, observers are tempted to ask: "Where on earth do they get these people?" The answer is: from the Far Right, which not only places its own people in influential positions but harasses many of the most distinguished members of the Administration, including Howard Baker, George Schultz, and Terrel Bell himself during his years in the cabinet.

Political patronage is nothing new in American politics, but ideological patronage for extremists is unusual. And, when responsible positions are entrusted to people whose major credentials are bizarre or intolerant beliefs, people have the right to ask why extremists have friends in high places.

David Kusnet is a Vice President of People For The American Way, a 270,000-member non-partisan constitutional liberties organization.

# Jesse Jackson Campaign News

by Nyewusi Askari

When I called the campaign headquarters of Rev. Jesse Jackson seeking the latest campaign update, a familiar voice greeted me. It was none other than former Portland Pam Smith. Many people in the city will remember Pam for her work with the Oregon Rainbow Coalition and The Urban League of Portland. In the early '80s, Pam migrated to Portland from Chicago, her home town. Earlier this year, she was chosen by the Jackson camp to work in the area of communications. The appointment took her to Washington, D.C., and, now, Chicago.

## New Appointments

Last Friday, Rev. Jesse Jackson held a press conference to announce the appointments of Mr. Jerry Austin, who will assume the duties of Campaign Manager; and California's Speaker of the House, Willie Brown, who will assume the duties of National Campaign Chairman.

The appointments of Mr. Austin and Mr. Brown bring an exciting credibility to the Jackson campaign.

At the press conference, when asked if he thought a Black could win the nomination for President, Mr. Brown replied that not only did he think a Black could win, he felt that a Black was going to win. He expressed his belief that Rev. Jackson was going to win, because he is the best candidate. Mr. Brown is quoted as saying, "The fact that Rev. Jackson happens to be Black is a source of pride for me and my mother."

Mr. Brown explained that although he didn't support Rev. Jackson's bid for Presidency in 1984, he is totally on-board and committed to making sure that Rev. Jackson makes it to Atlanta and Washington, D.C.

Mr. Austin expressed a similar commitment and reminded the press that he, like Mr. Brown, would not have joined the Jackson campaign if he didn't believe that Rev. Jackson could win.

## Persian Gulf Trip

Rev. Jackson has planned to visit the Middle East, although his request to visit American troops in the Persian Gulf was denied by the Pentagon.

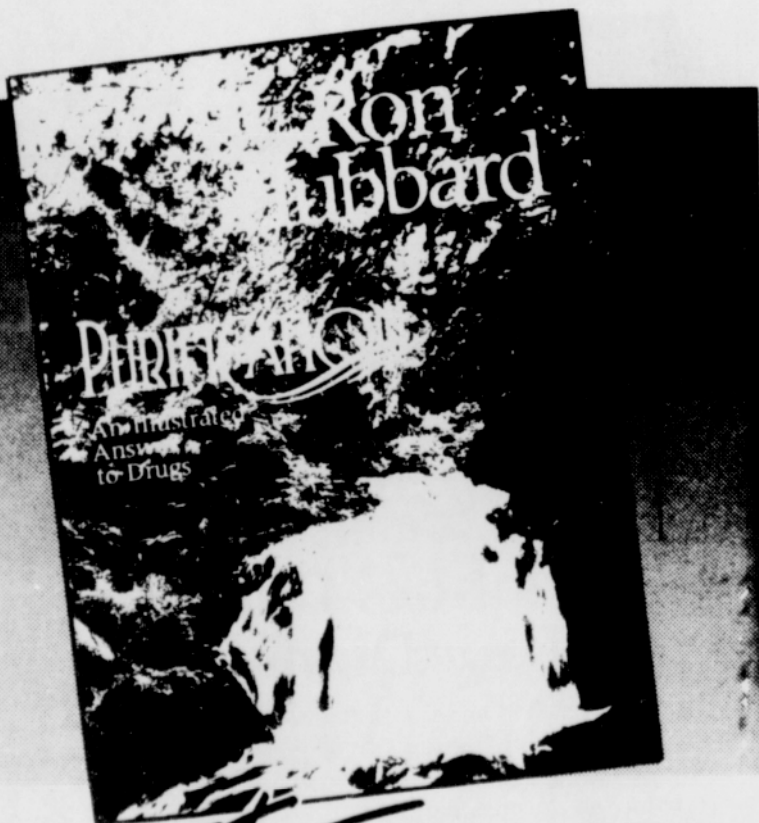
The purpose of the trip will be fact-finding, meeting with leaders in the region, and talking to Americans who are doing business in the area.

While in the Middle East, Rev. Jackson will visit Bahrain, where he will stay for a few days before journeying to Saudi Arabia. From there, he will go to Addis Ababa and Ethiopia. Rev. Jackson is also scheduled to meet with the Organization of African Unity.

The trip will begin November 24 and end November 30.

## Update

According to CNN (Cable News Network) earlier this week, Rev. Jackson received a death threat that is attributed to the KKK. The FBI is reported to have notified the Jackson camp of the threat. To date, Rev. Jackson has received more than 300 such death threats.



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