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EMERSON H. LOUCKS

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# THE KU KLUX KLAN IN PENNSYLVANIA

A Study in  
Nativism

BY  
EMERSON HUNSBERGER LOUCKS

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## PREFACE

The revived Ku Klux Klan and its stormy career is but one chapter in the history of American nativism. Other eventful chapters were written by the American Protective Association, by the Know Nothings and by many lesser organizations. Indeed, if one digs beneath the peculiar veneer given to nativism by the cult of national patriotism, it is easy to observe the same fundamental forces at work which have everywhere characterized the difficult process of adjustment between groups of differing cultures. In recent history the nation-state has increasingly become the center of popular loyalty. Hence protection of the recognized "national culture" against "alien influences" is felt to be especially virtuous. In an earlier age Hussites, Albigenses or Moors were the "aliens." Different times produce different vocabularies. Nativism to its devotees is the modern orthodoxy.

As the Ku Klux Klan was not the first chapter, so there is good reason to believe that it will not be the last chapter in the nativistic phase of cultural\* conflict and adjustment. Whenever circumstances combine to make the process sufficiently painful, nativists will again rally to engage "aliens" and their sympathizers in combat. The succession of nativist movements in the United States has produced little change in principles. Some refinements in procedure have occurred. The Know Nothings, for instance, warned by their predecessors of the 1830's and 1840's of the futility of attempting political action through a separate nativist party, learned to bore within the existing party structure and use it effectively. The American Protective Association in the 1890's and the recent Ku Klux Klan both learned the value of secrecy from the earlier Know Nothings. The next nativist movement could profit much by the experience of the Klan. One wonders whether the disaster occasioned by poor leadership and indiscriminate membership will be remembered.

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\*"Cultural" is used here and throughout this work in its broad connotation to include economic, political, religious and social factors—the mores in general.

Of peculiar value to the historian of national culture are the periods when nativism becomes militant. It is during these periods that the population tends to separate into rather well defined classes which differ in their fundamental loyalties. The numbers within these classes can then be measured with some accuracy and their effectiveness as pressure groups in society can be determined.

This study was undertaken with the conviction that a detailed picture of the Ku Klux Klan limited to a relatively small part of the "Invisible Empire" would prove more valuable than a more general but necessarily more superficial study. It would, moreover, serve as a needed check upon the earlier general accounts. The author chose the "Realm" of Pennsylvania as a field for research primarily because the growth, leadership and methods of the Klan in Pennsylvania were representative so far as the northern and eastern Realms were concerned. Moreover, the movement in Pennsylvania was especially interesting for the reason that it revealed greater persistence in this state than in any other state of the Union. While Klan membership never reached as high a total in Pennsylvania as in some other states—notably Texas, Ohio, Florida and Michigan—the paying membership in every other state had fallen below that of Pennsylvania by 1930.

In the preparation of this study, the writer has made every effort not only to learn the point of view of the leaders of the movement but also to understand the Klan as the ordinary rank and file members understood it. Scores of individuals were interviewed including men who were then active members and men whose membership had lapsed or who had deliberately resigned from the Order. Their statements were checked and compared with each other and with the statements of non-Klansmen and of anti-Klansmen in their respective communities.

The task of securing accurate data was not without its peculiar difficulties. By 1930, when this study was begun, most of the local Klans over the state had been disbanded. Significantly enough, the records of meetings and activities generally kept by local officials were not available. When the Order was discredited much of this written material was felt to be dangerously implicating or at least to be the basis of possible litigation and was



consequently destroyed. Again, where there were warring factions within local Klans, materials were often destroyed to prevent the opposing faction from securing them and, in some cases, to thwart the efforts of unpopular state officials who tried to collect them.

The reluctance of many Klansmen to talk freely of their experience was due less to conscientious scruples resulting from their oaths of secrecy than to other reasons. Certainly in many instances it was eloquent testimony of the fear which still remained in their minds as a result of the threats and recrimination and litigation that had characterized former days of active membership. Some refused to discuss the Klan unless a friend was present as a witness. In the case of one former Realm official, a satisfactory interview was secured only after two years of effort. In few cases was the first interview satisfactory; repeated visits had to be made.

When interviewing the author always submitted credentials from the Chairman of his Dissertation Committee, a member of the Faculty of Political Science of Columbia University, specifying the strictly academic nature of the study. Besides, he usually had introductions from other Klansmen. Nevertheless, important information was frequently given only upon promise not to reveal its source. In consequence, dozens of persons who have been very helpful to the writer must remain unacknowledged in the pages which follow.

The author wishes to express his thanks to Rev. John F. Strayer whose helpfulness in securing information has been invaluable, and to all those Klansmen, ex-Klansmen, ministers, school officials, newspaper editors and others who were courteous enough to grant interviews, answer letters of inquiry, or fill in questionnaires, supplying the data without which the following pages could not have been written. He is, of course, deeply indebted to David Saville Muzzey, Evarts Boutell Greene and John A. Krout who, as members of his dissertation committee gave invaluable counsel and suggestions.

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Shippensburg, Pa.,  
September, 1936.

## CHAPTER 1

### SOME BEGINNINGS OF NATIVISM

---

*"Awake Americans, the liberties and institutions of this country are in danger!"—The Omaha American*

---

The elements of the struggle which found expression in the recent Ku Klux Klan movement are by no means new phenomena in history. The confrontation of peoples of differing economic, religious or political beliefs and practices and the consequent need of adjustment to each other has always been productive of stress and strain. When periods made difficult by such adjustment have coincided with periods of general instability, open conflict accompanied by violence has not been unusual as is shown by the history of the Age of Religious Wars, the Age of Napoleon and of Metternich as well as the more recent Post-war Era.

The organization of the western world into competitive nation-states which has been so prominent a characteristic of recent times has given a nationalistic emphasis to cultural conflict and somewhat changed its vocabulary. Nevertheless, the older economic, racial and religious elements are all involved. Cultural differences, instead of being merely strange or repugnant, are disparagingly labeled "foreign" and *nativism* is the term commonly used to designate the movement against all such "alien" elements and influences. It is a term, however, which includes more than an expressed partiality to the native-born and their culture in preference to the foreign-born. In reality it signifies a hostility to divergent cultural elements which differentiate many natives as well as foreigners from the prescribed national standard. On the other hand it is a useful term because the word itself suggests the fact that loyalty to the nation and the "true" national culture (self-defined by nativists) has been a major source of the emotional force and of the prestige which nativism has exploited and upon which it has fed and grown,

From the very beginning of our colonial history, the cultural struggle in one or another of its fundamental aspects, free from its more nationalistic color, has been clearly observable. The early "Bible Commonwealth" of Massachusetts, acting on the belief that Church and State should "stand together . . . the one being helpful to the other," limited the body politic to approved church members and mercilessly suppressed political and religious dissent, persecuting variants within the Puritan group as well as Catholics and Quakers.

If circumstances required more liberality in the initial adjustments between religious groups in Maryland and Pennsylvania, it will be remembered that outside the scope of the specific adjustments in each case, there was scant toleration. Denial of the Trinity was a capital offense in Maryland. In Pennsylvania attendance at public worship was required and political privileges were limited to Christians. Indeed, in both Pennsylvania and Rhode Island, the most liberal of all the colonies, equality of political rights continued to be denied to Catholics during the early eighteenth century.

With the winning of independence and with the rapid increase of national feeling incident to the Revolutionary War and the critical years following, it became more and more prevalent to disparage religious and political variants as foreign and un-American. Anglican churchmen were among those who suffered greatly under charges of disloyalty and alienism. Jefferson and his followers, whose anti-Federalist and anti-Trinitarian beliefs made them distasteful to many, were damned as "Jacobins." On the other hand the aristocratic Hamilton and his "well-born" followers especially among the New England shippers were dubbed the "prigarchy" and "the English Junto."

It is significant that the "defenders of American institutions" pushed through Congress as early as 1798 laws increasing the residence requirement for citizenship from five to fourteen years, subjecting alien residents to deportation without accusation, public trial or privilege of counsel and threatening all hostile critics with fines and imprisonment. Political debate from Washington's inauguration until the close of the Second War with England, stimulated in part by the confusion in Europe, was replete with charges and epithets having a peculiarly nativist character—Tiptoe

traitors, Tories, Gallomaniacs, Jacobins, Wild Irish, French System-mongers: apostles of anarchy and atheism. One recalls Josiah Quincy's taunting remark that Madison's cabinet was "composed, to all efficient purposes, of two Virginians and a foreigner." Indeed, the number and vocabulary of those who might well be called nativists was already large even before the threat of the Holy Alliance to "the American system" stimulated the growth of both.

While there have been groups of considerable cultural homogeneity within our population, it is obvious that much diversity has always existed among Americans ever since the formative years of the Republic. It is evident, too, that the process of adjustment among the different cultural groups has been continuous. There have been times, however, when that process has been characterized by the activities of large and well organized nativist movements. In every case these movements have been coincident with, or have immediately followed, periods of rapid immigration. People have then been most conscious of the difficulties of adjustment and the status quo and reactionary groups—those most unwilling to see any change from the traditional cultural pattern—have been aroused to action.

A review of the census statistics for the first half of the nineteenth century reveals two things of importance in this connection. In 1830 there were in the United States, liberally estimated, but 400,000 foreign-born out of a total population of 13,000,000.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, there came to this country between 1830 and 1850 nearly 2,500,000 immigrants.<sup>2</sup> Among them were many English, Welsh and Scotch with whom little cultural adjustment was necessary. More disturbing to the native Americans were the Catholic Irish.<sup>3</sup> Wearied of their pitiful struggle as tenant farmers, violently hostile to everything English bred of years of exploitation and loyal followers of their priesthood, they were distinguished partly by their extreme poverty but chiefly by their cohesion and clannishness. They preferred to work together and to live in their own communities. This group cohesion also characterized their political activities. Voting as a bloc they frequently exhibited strength and astuteness enough to secure political appointments and contracts and, in some places, to secure the control of ward politics. Moreover, they often organized



their own militia companies and became active competitors for a share of the public funds to maintain their Catholic parochial schools.

Samuel F. B. Morse, taking time from his scientific and artistic work in 1834, was typical of the nativists who rallied "Americans" against this alien group. In a series of open letters written under the pseudonym "Brutus" which had wide circulation, he denounced the Catholics generally as politically dangerous.

"We say firmly to the Popish Bishops and Priests among us, give us your declaration of your relation to our civil government. Renounce your foreign allegiance to a Foreign Sovereign. Let us have your avowal in an official manifesto, that the Democratic Government under which you here live, delights you best. . . . Americans demand it."<sup>4</sup>

To him the rigorous naturalization law of 1798, later repealed, was a half-way measure. He wanted legislation providing that "no foreigner who may come into this country . . . shall ever be allowed to exercise the elective franchise."<sup>5</sup>

Local action resulted from the growing religious agitation whipped up by press and pulpit. In Charlestown, Massachusetts, an Ursuline convent was burned. In New York City a "Carroll Hall" ticket was opposed by an "American Protestant Union" over the question of sectarian schools, an issue which kept the nativist movement alive and resulted, in 1843, in the organization of the American Republican Party.

Although local in most of its aims, pledging its candidates to repeal the New York School law which had given the Catholics control of the public schools in some wards, the American Republican Party declared in favor of twenty-one years residence for voting and the enforcement of complete separation of religion and politics. In support of this last policy, it claimed that "Papal power is directly opposed in its end and aim to a republican form of government."<sup>6</sup>

By 1844, nativism had taken on national proportions, spreading from New York and Pennsylvania into Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, Delaware, and South Carolina. Politically organized as the Native American Party, it held its first national convention in Philadelphia in 1845 with fourteen states represented.<sup>7</sup>

The "Declaration"<sup>8</sup> of the convention contained a lurid description of the United States "rapidly becoming the lazarus-house and penal colony of Europe;" of immigrants "sent to work a revolution from republican freedom to the divine right of monarchs;" of an imperium in imperio, "a body uninformed and vicious, foreign in feeling, prejudice, and manner, yet armed with a vast and often controlling influence over the policy of a nation whose benevolence it abuses and whose kindness it habitually insults." Nor did the nativists of this time have much hope that an environment of political freedom would Americanize the newcomers.

"We hold that with few exceptions no man educated under one system of government can *ever* become thoroughly imbued with the essence and spirit of another system essentially different in character."

"That no man can eradicate, entirely, the prejudices and attachments associated with the land of his birth, so as to become a perfectly safe depository for political trust, in any other country."<sup>9</sup>

The nativist movement was not confined exclusively to the seaboard cities or states. Wherever the immigrant was present in sufficient numbers to make adjustment with the native population difficult the movement grew apace. There was a strong nativist group in Cincinnati where, by 1840, half of the voting population were of foreign birth. Further west, St. Louis and New Orleans were greatly affected and many smaller communities came under the control of the Native Americans.

In Pennsylvania, Philadelphia was a center of the movement. In 1844 it suffered a veritable warfare between the nativists and the Irish over the use of the Protestant version of the Bible in the public schools. There was much bloodshed and destruction of property and it was necessary to call out the militia three times to stop the rioting.<sup>11</sup>

Similar rioting occurred in many places giving the movement an unsavory reputation and alienating many of its more conservative members. The Democratic Party had denounced the nativists as bigots from the very beginning of the movement and the Whigs turned against them in 1844 blaming their activities for the defeat of Henry Clay, the Whig candidate for President in that year. By 1847, the local Native American organizations had

largely lost their power with the exception of the one in Philadelphia.<sup>12</sup>

The very year which marked the disorganization of the American Republican Associations, however, witnessed the Irish famine and the beginning of another great migration from the Emerald Isle. Only about half a million had come in the decade of the thirties. In the forties the total was over one and a half millions and in the fifties 2,707,620 entered the country.<sup>13</sup> In the year 1850 the natives of Ireland constituted 43.04 per cent of the alien population. Moreover, immigration was further swollen by Germans who, dissatisfied with the failure of the 1848 revolutionary movements, came in large numbers exceeding, after 1852, the Irish.

Corresponding to the growth of the foreign population was that of the Catholic Church. In 1830 there were but 230 Catholic churches and 232 priests in the United States and the Catholic population was estimated by their own statisticians at half a million. By 1854 these numbers had grown to 1,712 churches, 746 other stations, 1,574 priests and over a million and a half total Catholic population.<sup>14</sup>

It is not surprising, therefore, that there was a revival of nativism during the decade of the 1850's. A new turn was given to the movement by the adoption of the methods of the numerous secret societies that had sprung up in part imitation of the Masons, Odd Fellows, Red Men and the like. The nativist secret society destined to be the most successful was the Order of the Star Spangled Banner, formed in 1850 with a policy "to influence local politics by concerted action of its members in favor of nominees selected from the tickets of the political parties (who were) protestant and American-born."<sup>15</sup>

Using secret rituals, grips, signs, degrees, meetings and playing upon the curiosity as well as the nativistic sentiments of the people, this Order of the Star Spangled Banner grew until in 1855 it had State Councils in thirty-two states and a claimed membership of a million and half voters.<sup>16</sup>

Under the popular name of Know Nothing Party, the Order repeated the same charges against the foreigners and Catholics and made the same demands for reform as had the nativists of

the 1830's and 1840's. The published declaration of principles prepared by President Barker of the Order included the following :

“Americans shall rule America.

No sectarian influence in our legislation or in the administration of American laws.

Hostility to the assumptions of the Pope, through the Bishops, Priests, and Prelates of the Roman Catholic Church here in a Republic sanctified by Protestant blood.

Thorough reform in the Naturalization laws.

Free and liberal educational institutions for all sects and classes with the Bible, God's Holy Word, as a universal textbook.”<sup>17</sup>

The primary elections of 1854 revealed the growing strength of the Know Nothings. Secretly choosing their own candidates, they elected persons not known to be running for the offices. Two such surprise candidates were elected in Lancaster<sup>18</sup> and one in Allegheny, Pennsylvania.<sup>19</sup> In Philadelphia the Know Nothing candidates for Mayor, Solicitor, Comptroller, and for a majority of the City Council were successful. In the fall elections the Know Nothings elected practically all their candidates to the legislature as well as to every other state office in Massachusetts.<sup>20</sup> In New York they polled over one-fourth of the total vote cast.<sup>21</sup> In Pennsylvania as a whole the Know Nothing vote was two-fifths of the total. In Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Blair, Clarion, Clearfield, Crawford, Dauphin, Huntingdon, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mifflin and Perry Counties the Know Nothings polled a majority of the votes.<sup>22</sup>

But along with the increasing membership in 1855 and 1856 grew internal dissention. The secrecy which had been characteristic of the movement was now criticized from within as well as from without the Party. The Oath of Admission was believed by some to be too severe. The declaration against “the aggressive policy and corrupting tendencies of the Roman Catholic Church”<sup>23</sup> was criticized as too harsh by the Maryland delegates who proposed a milder substitute. The result of this dissatisfaction was the adoption in 1856 of a conciliatory policy by the National Council of the Party which sanctioned “the reform of state Know Nothing constitutions” and suggested the substitution of a “pledge of honor” for the existing oath of admission. The Council likewise advocated “free and open discussion of political principles.”<sup>24</sup>



This retreat from robust nativism was occasioned by the fact that many people had joined the Party more out of disgust with the Whig and Democratic parties than because of fundamental nativist beliefs. The chief cause of factional discord within the Party which resulted in its decline was, however, not differences of opinion regarding secrecy, oaths or any of the truly nativist principles. It was the question of "bleeding Kansas" that destroyed the Know Nothing Party. In its national convention of 1856, the anti-slavery men came prepared to bolt. When their resolution was voted down providing that no candidate be nominated who favored slavery north of 36 degrees 30 minutes, they withdrew from the organization. The remainder of the delegates, after much wrangling, finally adopted the squatter sovereignty principle which the Douglas Democrats claimed as their private property. This lost for the Know Nothings their distinctiveness on the chief issue of the time and sealed their doom as a national political organization.

Locally they retained their effectiveness for some time but the chief constructive legislation they secured in line with their nativist principles was the enactment of literacy tests for voting in Connecticut and Massachusetts and in the latter state a law requiring "daily reading in the public schools of some portion of the Bible in the common English version."<sup>25</sup>

The Civil War not only diverted attention from nativism but greatly curtailed immigration. After peace was made the immigrant tide swelled rapidly, stimulated by the possibility of securing free land under the Homestead Act. Between 1866 and 1873, over 2,725,000 foreigners arrived.<sup>26</sup> When hard times and increased economic competition came with the panic of 1873, nativist feeling against the foreigner revived. Although no separate nativist party appeared, it is significant that the platforms of both Republican and Democratic parties contained nativist planks in 1876. The Republican Party even recommended a constitutional amendment preventing the use of public funds or property in support of sectarian schools.<sup>27</sup>

It was not until the decade of the 1890's, however, that the nativists again combined into an organization of national importance, named by its founder, Henry F. Bowers, the American Protective Association. Begun in Clinton, Iowa, in 1887, it had

spread by 1893 into twenty states and had a membership of over 70,000. Nativism had spread westward with the advancing population. The trans-Allegheny cities—Rochester, Toledo, Detroit, Des Moines, Saginaw, Omaha—became important centers of the new movement. The country districts of the midwest were also affected by this “new Know-Nothingism.” The interest of the rural areas may be explained in part by the fact that the immigrants who came during the decade of the 1880’s in larger numbers than any other nationality were Germans who acquired farms and populated the country side.<sup>28</sup>

Like the older nativist organizations, the American Protective Association found the cultural item to which it most openly objected a religious one. A large percentage of the newcomers from Germany were Catholics while in the growing mid-western industrial cities, those Germans had been supplemented by Catholics from Austria, Italy and Ireland.<sup>29</sup> The growth of the Catholic Church was rapid. Indeed, it practically doubled in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Instead of seven archbishops as in 1860, there were 78. The number of Catholic Churches was 12,293 as compared with 2,385 in 1860, while the Catholic population grew from 3,177,140 to 7,474,850 during the same period.<sup>30</sup> The mid-west was not without its share of this growth. To have such large numbers of non-Protestant people in their midst was a new experience for the A.P.A. belt and its reaction was quite like that of the seacoast cities during the forties and fifties.

Then, too, the nativists were envious of the growing industrial and professional strength of the Catholics who became doctors, lawyers, teachers and editors as well as day laborers. In the great railway and commercial corporations they were filling responsible positions and officering trade unions along with men of the Protestant faith. The latter, believing themselves to these positions born, found in the A.P.A. an organization through which they might compete more successfully with the Catholics and again “relegate them to the position of hewers of wood and drawers of water, their proper place.”<sup>31</sup>

This jealousy of their Catholic competitors was hardly something of which the nativists could be very proud nor could it be used directly in their campaigns for membership. They turned, therefore, to the old arguments: the Catholics were dangerous as

citizens; they were more dangerous as holders of public office since their action was always directed, not for the good of all, but for the good of their own ecclesiastical body; they were mere servants of a foreign potentate whose sympathies were anti-republican.

Certain occurrences added strength to their claims. A Papal delegation headed by Msgr. Satolli came to Washington. *The Omaha American*, commenting on the coming of this "American Pope," expressed the nativist sentiment:

"Why should the country throw open its gates to a pretender, a blasphemer, a politico-ecclesiastical fraud, who sails under the sounding title of vice-regent of God? . . . Awake Americans, the liberties and institutions of this country are in danger."<sup>32</sup>

Many Catholics had also opposed the Edwards compulsory school law in Illinois, and the somewhat similar Bennett law of Wisconsin. The Catholic Council of Baltimore charged every pastor to "build and maintain a distinctly Catholic school in his parish as a remedy against the colorless instruction offered in the public schools where religious training is, as a rule, excluded."<sup>33</sup> The Faribault Plan was proposed in Minnesota whereby the parochial schools would be maintained and administered by the public school authorities with permission given to the Catholics to use the schools for religious instruction after school hours.<sup>34</sup> Catholic groups about the same time advocated state aid for parochial schools in Maryland and New York.<sup>35</sup> All this appeared to the nativists a well laid "Jesuit plot" to destroy the American "non-sectarian" public school system.

Organizers of the American Protective Association who were responsible for increasing the membership, made deliberate efforts to play upon the fears and credulity of the Protestant people, an effort which met with success particularly in the rural areas. They spread ill founded rumors regarding Catholic military organizations which practiced in secret and hid their arms in churches.<sup>36</sup> They concocted tales of the immorality to be found in convents and monasteries—"hatching houses of infamy." They hired speakers who posed as "escaped" nuns and ex-priests.<sup>37</sup> A bombastic press, of which the *A.P.A. Magazine* was typical,

grew up in support of the movement and printed quantities of "disclosures." *The Patriotic American*, a weekly organ of the A.P.A. published in Detroit, created a sensation by printing a spurious document ascribed to Leo XIII in which American Catholic citizens were absolved from their allegiance to the United States government. This forgery went on to state that "on or about the feast of Ignatius Loyola, in the year of our Lord, 1893, it will be the duty of all the faithful to exterminate all heretics found within the jurisdiction of the United States of America."<sup>38</sup>

The effect of this forgery, which was copied by the A.P.A. papers throughout the country, has been described by Elbert Hubbard:

"I was visiting an old farmer friend in Illinois, and very naturally the talk was of the great fair. Was he going? Not he—he dared not leave his house a single day; did I not know that the Catholics had been ordered by the Pope to burn the barns and houses of all heretics? It sounded like a joke but I saw the grey eyes of this old man flash and I knew he was terribly in earnest. With trembling hands he showed me the Pope's encyclical printed in a newspaper which had a deep border of awful black . . . I was taken to the two clergymen in the village, a Presbyterian and a Methodist; both were full of fear and hate toward the Catholics . . . They were sure that the order to kill and burn had gone forth.

"And so in many towns and villages as I journeyed; I found this quaking fear. In many places men were arming themselves with Winchester rifles; the A.P.A. lodges were rapidly initiating new members and lurid literature which was being vomited forth from presses in Louisville, Chicago, Omaha, and Kansas City was being sent broadcast."<sup>39</sup>

Besides the credulous who swallowed wholesale such forgeries as the above and the stories peddled from place to place by ex-priests, there was another group whose interest in the A.P.A. was more calculating. The Know Nothing movement, as we have seen, had in the beginning merely indorsed candidates who were most favorable to nativist principles. Later, it placed its own ticket in the field. The American Protective Association, on the other hand, adopted the shorter way to success by capturing outright in many regions the machinery of the Republican Party. The Democratic administration had the misfortune to be held re-



sponsible in the popular mind for the hard times and business depression in the summer of 1893 and the A.P.A.-ists, where they had control of the Republican machinery, were carried to victory on the wave of Democratic reaction that swept over the country. Politicians and petty office seekers were aware of the strategic position held by the A.P.A. and were quite willing to forego any deterring scruples in order to partake of the political plums which membership in the A.P.A. offered. "Hundreds of new members," writes a leading historian of the movement,<sup>40</sup> "joined the A.P.A. from October 1893 to November 1894, who cared little for its anti-Catholic program. They were after the loaves and fishes of city and county office and the control or possession of the local party machinery."

Another factor which had some bearing upon the growth of the A.P.A. movement was the encouragement given the movement by those who, opposed to the organization of labor unions, saw in it a means to divide the workers and undermine their unions. This, rather than any hatred of Catholicism, accounts for the willingness of some of the large industrial and transportation companies to encourage the religious fanaticism of the A.P.A.<sup>41</sup>

The movement had several significant results. Politically the affiliation of the A.P.A. with the Republican Party in 1892 was important. The Catholic vote was largely given to the Democrats with the result that the strong Republican states of Illinois and Wisconsin returned majorities for Cleveland and helped secure his election. It is clear, also, that the opposition which the A.P.A. directed against Catholic interference with the public schools helped to unify Protestant opinion in support of "non-sectarian" schools and the complete separation of Church and State. It is doubtful, however, whether the public school system was strengthened by the movement, for many Catholics who had loyally supported public schools came to regard them as Protestant schools and transferred their support to the parochial schools maintained by the Catholic Church.<sup>42</sup>

Like the nativist movements which preceded it, the career of the A.P.A. was meteoric, disappearing as rapidly as it had risen. Without doubt it was successful from the standpoint of local politicians and office seekers. But when, in its political capacity,

it made the bad mistake of refusing to indorse the candidacy of McKinley in the election of 1896, it relegated itself to a mere faction of the Republican Party and its political hangers-on began to leave it like rats from a falling house. Although the A.P.A. preserved its national organization up to 1900, its history as a factor of political importance might be said to have ceased in 1896.

Based largely upon emotion, the movement was difficult to maintain. In spite of fears, barns were not burned nor were "heretics" slaughtered. The more sober elements among the Protestant groups were hostile to its methods, if not altogether opposed to its principles. Fictitious "escaped nuns" were eventually exposed as frauds, the "official" press disappeared from want of subscribers, and the movement collapsed.

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## CHAPTER 2

### THE REVIVAL OF THE KU KLUX KLAN

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*"To the lovers of Law and Order, Peace and Justice,  
we send greeting; and to the shades of the valiant,  
venerated Dead, we gratefully and affectionately  
dedicate the KNIGHTS OF THE KU KLUX  
KLAN."*

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—William Joseph Simmons

Killed by the excesses of its propagators and by the political parasites which fed upon it, the A.P.A. movement disappeared. Being a perennial, however, only the more visible leaves and stock of nativism died away. Hidden from view, strong roots still existed from which new growth was destined to appear when conditions again became favorable.

There were three pre-requisites for a renewal of nativism. One continued to exist during the years following the disappearance of APA-ism, viz., a large Catholic immigration. Indeed, this increased, hardly curtailed at all by the mildly restrictive legislation of 1903 and 1907. Not until the dark days of the World War did fortune provide the other two pre-requisites. The first of these was the obliteration of the memory of the A.P.A.'s excesses. The second was a vague but widespread feeling of fear enhanced by the pinch of economic want.

It is true that prior to the World War some groups were fearful, among which was the newly established (1911) Guardians of Liberty. The First American Catholic Missionary Congress, "the largest body of prelates, priests and laymen ever to have assembled in the New World"<sup>1</sup> which met in Chicago in 1908, and such events as Jubilee of Cardinal Gibbons, the Second Missionary Congress and the Eucharistic Congress which followed in rapid succession, all caused cold shivers to run down the spines of confirmed nativists. Spreading forebodings of disaster, *The Menace*, a virulently anti-Catholic weekly paper, attained a



circulation, in 1914, of over 1,400,000. Still there was no widespread revival of organized nativism in consequence. The years of relative agricultural prosperity after 1900 had a deadly effect upon a possible nativist revival in the A.P.A. belt and undoubtedly delayed it.

Largely by chance, the revival of nativism began in the South where a movement at first primarily concerned with "white supremacy" was gradually broadened out to include all the tenets of the older nativist movements and some new ones as well. Its founder was William Joseph Simmons of Atlanta, Georgia. The inspiration for his enterprise had come from his boyhood days when his most pleasant activity had been to listen to or read of the exploits of the Ku Klux Klan and to reenact these in mimic drama. "From a child in dresses," explained Simmons, "I can remember how old Aunt Viney, my black mammy, used to pacify us children late in the evening by telling us about the Kuklux." When about twenty years old he found a volume on the Klan which especially thrilled him. Laying the book aside he had a vision. "On horseback in their white robes they rode across the wall in front of me. . . . As the picture faded out, I got down on my knees and swore that I would found a fraternal organization which would be a memorial to the Kuklux Klan."

There is no evidence, however, except what appears plainly apocryphal, to show that Mr. Simmons, when he and a few of his friends applied for a charter for a "patriotic, military, benevolent, ritualistic, social and fraternal order," intended to found a nationwide revival of APA-ism or a new Know Nothing movement. Many writers have speculated upon Mr. Simmons' original purpose in establishing the Order. Ward Greene, an *Atlanta Journal* reporter, undoubtedly belittled the imagination of Simmons when he concluded, after a survey of its origin, that "prohibition made the Ku Klux Klan" which was just "a new fraternal order with locker club trimmings."<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the dreams credited to Simmons of a great American fraternity that knew no Mason's and Dixon's Line undoubtedly err in the opposite direction.

For the success of the new enterprise, its birthplace, the city of Atlanta, was important. It had been the seat of publication, during the pre-war years, of a bitterly anti-Catholic journal,

*The Jeffersonian*. Then, like the smaller Pennsylvania cities of York and Lancaster, Atlanta, Georgia, is a city of "joiners." Simmons himself held membership in two orders, the Masons and the Knights of Pythias, at the time he was establishing his own.

Simmons had personal characteristics which aided him in his enterprise. An impressive person, he stood over six feet tall, had a smooth shaven face, clear eyes, and a powerful voice that could hold for hours the attention of an average audience. He had served as circuit rider in the Methodist Episcopal Church for some years, later became professor of History at Lanier University, was a veteran of the Spanish-American War, although his title of Colonel was a complimentary one, and, as one commentator expressed it, he was "as full of sentiment as a plum is full of juice."<sup>4</sup> One essential characteristic he lacked. He had little organizing ability and the movement might have languished or remained of purely local significance if other factors had not strengthened it.

The name of the Order was one of these. As all students of society are aware, new institutions gain advantage if they can be robed in garments of worthy tradition or resurrected like the Deuteronomic Code from the sacred confines of the temple of precedent. In choosing his charter members, Simmons included two men who had been members of the original Klan, Dr. George D. Couch and Rev. J. F. V. Saul, in order to add prestige to the revived Klan and to justify his claim that the Order was authentic. The regalia and nomenclature, which Simmons took from the earlier organization, served the same purpose. To be sure, one had to have a poor memory of history or else the prevalent race and color prejudice of the South to accept as valid the "sublime lineage" of Simmons' Klan. As a southern fraternity, however, this was an acceptable "talking point."

The principles of the new Order were the accepted fundamentals of Southern thought. Simmons was addressing his own South when he wrote:

"The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan is a purely patriotic fraternal organization designed to memorialize the Klan of the Reconstruction period and to perpetuate the principles for which it stood. . . . It stands for the preservation

of American ideals and institutions, the protection of the home, the chastity of womanhood, the maintenance of the bloodbought rights and liberties of the Anglo-Saxon race . . . The Ku Klux Klan stands unreservedly and unashamedly for white supremacy in America . . .”<sup>5</sup>

Any reader of the earlier statements of Mr. Simmons is apt to remark, “Well, what of it!” The great mass of southern Whites had for years held such sentiments. “White supremacy” and “the chastity of womanhood” were certainly safe enough for anyone to support but it is difficult to conceive that they needed special preachment in Atlanta in 1915 or 1916. Racial antagonism had not increased nor were there any events which could lead one to foresee the serious riots which later did occur in Chicago and elsewhere. There was loud talk by foreign language groups in justification of the action of their respective countries in the World War but foreign conspiracy had not raised its ugly head to endanger the native stock in Atlanta. One is led to conclude that Simmons himself was not especially interested in whipping negroes or tarring and feathering wicked whites or aliens. He was enamoured of the fraternal and the spectacular features of the organization. The thought of being clad in a mysterious garb and of riding a big horse through the streets of Atlanta possessed and fascinated him.

For a period of four years, however, the growth of the Order was almost negligible. Its rapid expansion dates from 1920 when Simmons hired the “Southern Publicity Association” to bring the Order to the attention of the public. This “Association” consisted of two people, one Edward Young Clarke and a Mrs. Elizabeth (Bessie) Tyler. Clarke had attained some prestige as a “physician for sick towns.” At one time he had been employed to administer a Harvest Home Festival in Atlanta. It was there that the Association was organized. As Mrs. Tyler tells the story:

“I was interested in hygiene work for babies, sort of better babies movement. I had taken enough of a medical course to fit myself for the work of visiting among the tenements and advising mothers about their babies, and in the Harvest Home Festival we had a “Better Babies’ Parade, of which I had charge. It was through this that I met Mr. Clarke.

"After we had talked over many business enterprises we formed the Southern Publicity Association. I was associated with the Y. W. C. A. I financed the Southern Publicity Association and stayed in the office, and Mr. Clarke was field representative, planning and working out publicity campaigns of one sort and another.

"We came in contact with Col. Simmons and the Ku Klux Klan through the fact that my son-in-law joined it. We found Col. Simmons was having a hard time to get along. He couldn't pay his rent. His receipts were not sufficient to take care of his personal needs. He was a minister and a clean living man, and he was heart and soul for the success of his Ku Klux Klan. After we had investigated it from every angle, we decided to go into it with Col. Simmons and give it the impetus that it could get best from publicity.

"It was my idea that we would get a little local publicity throughout the South or through our section and that the order would grow by degrees. But the minute we said "Ku Klux" editors from all over the United States began literally pressing us for publicity." <sup>6</sup>

As Mrs. Tyler suggests, the pressure for publicity was not altogether due to the skill of either member of the Southern Publicity Association. The tabloid press and the rotogravure editors of the regular press had a large share in it. Mysterious marchers in white robes and peaked hoods were a godsend to them.

An enterprising newspaper photographer in Atlanta was the first to discover the photographic possibilities of the new movement. Ward Greene in his *Notes for a History of the Klan* has graphically described the incident as follows:

"Matty tried to get Simmons and Clarke to pose. They refused. A secret order, was it? No faces—just cowls and robes and crosses? He had seen "The Birth of a Nation" and knew his stuff. Off he went, rigged up his uniforms, hired twenty men, lit a couple of crosses, and turned on the Graflex. The pictures sold like wildfire. . . . *The New York Times* played them up in its rotogravure section. No dirty digs from any quarter. . . . (And since Matty believed in hiring the cheapest labor possible) the first pictures of the Klan to be published in America were posed by twenty sons of Ham at two bits a man." <sup>7</sup>

E. Y. Clarke and Mrs. Tyler were, of course, directly responsible for the work of promotion. The contract which Simmons



made with them was liberal. It was a commission arrangement. Of each ten dollar "donation" which was made as a prerequisite to membership, they retained eight. After expenses were paid, they anticipated a tidy remainder as their personal remuneration. It was soon learned that to be effective, the appeal for members had to be fitted to each particular locality and that the mere rehearsal of the principles of the Order was not sufficient. A program of action was more appealing and had to be provided. As a consequence of his experience Clarke selected his helpers according to their ability to turn the bellows upon smouldering fires of racial and religious hatreds and those who encouraged night-riding and a free-handed mob justice were winked at.

The movement grew and violence increased with it. In Texas, Georgia and Louisiana, Klan lawlessness became serious and it was prevalent in other Southern States. In a few instances the Klan used pressure upon its own members to make them behave. More frequently, and with much more gusto, it gave its attention to outsiders who had not kept the moral code generally held by the Klan elements of the community. If the offense had been committed by a Catholic, an alien or a Jew, the promptest attention was usually given to it. One investigator who made an extended study of the Klan during its early years, reported that while its activities varied considerably from place to place, in general "bootleggers seem to be the favorite objects of attack. Dope peddlers come in for attention, grafting officials are taken care of, places of amusement regulated, unfair business dealing punished . . . But there is also much effort put into regulating personal conduct . . . men who maintained illicit relations with women, who failed to support their families, drank or gambled too heavily, or in general 'acted scandalously.' " <sup>8</sup>

*The Literary Digest* reported "forty-three tar and feather parties . . . held in Texas" during the six months prior to August 1921, the victim in one instance being a white woman. "In another case the initials KKK were branded on the forehead of a negro bellboy. In Missouri a sixty-year-old farmer was whipt by a mob and in Florida an archdeacon of the English Episcopal Church was both whipt and tarred and feathered." Charles P. Sweeney, prominent in one of the earliest newspaper investigations of the Klan, reported that "The law is flouted . . . A

mayor in Columbus, Georgia, who refuses to remove a city official who has proved efficient and capable finds his home dynamited; the city manager, 'a blue-bellied Yankee,' is driven from the city. Members of a board of education in Atlanta, Georgia, demurring at voting for a resolution to dismiss all Catholics employed as public school teachers, receive letters threatening their lives."<sup>10</sup>

The Klan did not make a direct appeal to the criminal element to join it but, on the other hand, little effort was made by most of the organizers to keep the illiterate and the hoodlum elements out of its membership. There were undoubtedly groups not affiliated with the Klan who took advantage of the Klan's secrecy and garb to discredit the Order or to do a little "reforming" on their own account. It is impossible to estimate what percentage of the violence credited to the Klan was actually committed with the official approval of the Order. Nevertheless, public opinion as expressed in the secular and religious press of the country began to turn hostile to the movement in the autumn of 1921.

The Houston (Texas) *Chronicle* was one of the first newspapers to criticize unsparingly the Klan. One angle of its attacks appears in the following quotation:

"It matters not who can get into your organization or who is kept out; any group of men can ape your disguise, your methods and your practices. If outrages occur for which you are not accountable—and they will—you have no way of clearing yourselves, except by throwing off your disguise and invoking the publicity you have sought to deny. Your role of masked violence, of purification by stealth, of reform by terrorism is an impossible one. Your position is such that you must accept responsibility for every offense which smacks of disguised tyranny."<sup>11</sup>

Beginning with September, 1921, the general press attack on the movement grew measurably. Led by the *New York World*, some twenty newspapers ran a series of syndicated articles which exposed to the general public not only the methods and violence of the Klan but the mysteries of its ritual and secret lore, the jargon of its vocabulary and the oath which bound its members. The style of the articles revealed the evident intent of their authors and publishers to hold the Klan 'up for ridicule and, if possible, to destroy it with laughter. The weekly press followed, printing

articles under such titles as "Applied Violence," "A Nightgown Tyranny," "Imperial Lawlessness" and the like. Typical of these was the sarcastic essay entitled "The Ku Klux Klan: The Soul of Chivalry," in which the Klan was denounced as "a child conceived in the tradition of a lawless past, and brought forth in the extravagant obscurantism of present day prejudice."<sup>12</sup>

Among the religious papers which took up the cudgels against the Klan's methods was the undenominational *Christian Work* (N. Y.) which wrote: "To have a group of men abroad in America whose purpose it is to stir up prejudice of any kind is not only Un-Christian, but contrary to well-established American Principles."<sup>13</sup> The Atlanta Wesleyan *Christian Advocate*, speaking for the southern leaders of the Methodist Episcopal Church, declared: "The Ku Klux Klan is not so much condemned by any proposed purpose, as by the tragical results in the multiplication all over the country of acts of masked mob violence for which the Order is directly or indirectly responsible."<sup>13</sup> The Presbyterian *Advance* condemned the Order for secrecy which offered "a temptation too strong to be resisted to take the law into its own hands."<sup>13</sup> The Reformed Church *Messenger* struck the same note of condemnation.

Congress was stimulated to action by this press criticism and the Rules Committee of the House of Representatives conducted an investigation which was replete with charges of violence and illegality against the Klan and hearty denials of the same by the Klan officials. Col. Simmons was much distressed to find the child of his dreams so maligned. He had had no intention of raising up an Order so undisciplined. He did not believe that Klansmen had actually committed the crimes charged against them, but if such was actually the case, they had violated the principles of the Order.<sup>14</sup>

This turn of events was not anticipated by the leaders of the movement. The credit for weathering the tempest goes in large measure to Mrs. Tyler. E. Y. Clarke was admittedly frightened. In August of 1921 when it appeared that a storm was about to break, he strengthened his secret service and protective personnel by the employment of Fred L. Savage who had had experience running a private detective agency in New York City and had participated in breaking up the longshoreman's strike there in

1920.<sup>15</sup> He was given the title of Chief of Investigation, and he or his agents accompanied Clarke everywhere he went to afford him protection. The exposure of the Klan by the *New York World* terrified Clarke, and when it appeared that Congress was actually going to conduct an investigation, he felt that it would be safer for him outside the Order, so he wrote his resignation and gave it to the press. When the reporters immediately called upon Mrs. Tyler to find out whether the other member of the Southern Publicity Association had any intention of abandoning the Order, she learned of Clarke's action for the first time. Furious, she denounced him as "weak-kneed," and stated her intention to stay with the organization. She undoubtedly sensed the situation better than Clarke; knew that exposures were good publicity and, what is more important, knew that the very fact that the northern metropolitan *New York World* spat upon the Klan would cause a large group in the South, with characteristic stubbornness, to smile upon it—indeed, to embrace it ecstatically. So powerful a force was she in the Atlanta office that within forty-eight hours Clarke was persuaded to withdraw his resignation and stay with the organization, a decision which was unfortunate in the light of what was to happen to him later.<sup>16</sup>

The results of the investigations turned out as Mrs. Tyler had predicted. The membership of the Klan before Clarke and Tyler were given charge of promotion was a mere five or six thousand. From the time they began their work until the eve of the investigations mentioned above, the membership had increased to 125,000, conservatively estimated.<sup>17</sup> The Klan leaders claimed more than this, stating that the total was as high as 500,000. This number is, however, an evident exaggeration which the *New York World* repeated, perhaps to add to the importance of its investigation and to hurry reaction. After the investigations, the membership grew very rapidly. Klan officials reported gains as great as 5,000 a day.<sup>18</sup> Clarke's profits likewise soared to an estimated figure of \$40,000.00 per month.

Such was the status of the Klan when Pennsylvania became a factor in its history.



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## CHAPTER 3

### THE KLAN MOVES INTO PENNSYLVANIA

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*"The Klan demands of its members support in time, work, money and sacrifice."—from The Klan Today*

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The general press denunciation of the Klan in the autumn of 1921 was a boon to the Klan organizers in Pennsylvania. They had come into the State earlier in the year with F. W. Atkins in charge. Offices were set up in Philadelphia and with a staff of five the business of organizing the State was begun.

Progress was slower than these men had anticipated. They decided it might go faster if efforts were initiated at several points, so the State was divided at the Susquehanna River and two of the men, Sam D. Rich and a Mr. Faulkner as assistant, were sent to the western "province" and located at Pittsburgh. Here an office was rented in the Jenkins Arcade Building, the sign "Advertising and Publicity" was printed on the door and callers were welcomed.<sup>1</sup>

In neither division of the State was the movement successful for the first five months. Scarcely enough money was taken in to pay for office rentals. Rich was obliged to dismiss his helper in order to conserve funds. The fact that the organizers were not natives of the State, Atkins having come from Atlanta, Georgia, and Rich from Covington, Kentucky, made it more difficult for them to win the confidence of prospective members. The best plan, they soon discovered, was to sit in their offices and rely for field organizers upon local men. In the Pittsburgh district, A. L. Cotton was one of these.

Sam Rich was a good salesman. He was a large, impressive man and while he possessed little ability to work with crowds or to make a public address, there are many witnesses who testify to the fact that few men with whom Rich had a personal interview ever came away without having given him the ten dollars

which represented their donation to the cause—more literally, perhaps, to Mr. Rich's maintenance.

It was so with Mr. Cotton although he had already become interested in the Klan and, some weeks before Rich's arrival, had written to the Atlanta office for information concerning it. Moreover Rich found in Cotton a desirable worker. Not yet out of his thirties, good humored, able to tell a story with flourish, built like a football tackle, a good lodge man, Cotton had the qualifications for which Rich was looking. Besides, Cotton had never settled down to a single occupation and was quite willing to give this new work a trial. A bargain was struck. Cotton was commissioned a Kleagle (organizer) and sent to Erie for his apprenticeship training.

Not very successful in securing members, this first venture was rich in experience. His remuneration was a forty percent commission on the initiation fees which he collected, but this was barely sufficient to pay for his food and lodging. Forced at last to get publicity for himself and his cause, he used methods, the details of which he refused to divulge, which raised considerable opposition. He was warned to leave town—but not he. Finally arrested, he served a short jail sentence and was, thereafter, a bona fide martyr for the cause. His success after this experience was more rapid. Soon he was directing the organization in several counties and had charge of a staff of workers.<sup>2</sup>

The publicity given to the Klan by the newspaper and governmental investigations dispelled the clouds of obscurity which had hung over the movement in Pennsylvania and became a great boon to its propagators. The number of Kleagles was rapidly increased and in many cases they found their work relatively easy. The names of Joseph Shoemaker, Samuel Frazier and Lemuel Peebles became more or less familiar in all parts of the State, while others were well known in more local areas; John Davis in Westmoreland and Fayette counties; Paul Winter in southeastern Pennsylvania; Carl Risher in the area centering in Scranton; Harry McNeel in Armstrong and Cameron counties, to mention but a few.

In the western provinces of the realm, the movement spread rapidly up the Allegheny River and southward through the coal and steel towns in the Monongehela and Youghiogheny valleys.

Especially strong units were organized in Pittsburgh, New Kensington, Homestead, Mt. Pleasant, Johnstown, and Altoona. Many of the klaverns had a membership above five hundred and few indeed that did not enroll more than a hundred members.<sup>3</sup>

Although few accurate figures are at this writing available, observers are agreed that the peak of the numerical strength of the Klan in western Pennsylvania came toward the end of 1924, when the total active membership of the Klan reached a figure somewhat in excess of 125,000. This figure does not include the transient members who joined the Klan apparently out of curiosity and immediately thereafter allowed their membership to lapse by non-payment of dues and realm taxes. This latter group was estimated by various Klan officials to range from fifteen to as high as thirty percent of the total enrollment.

In the eastern part of the realm, progress was not as rapid for a number of reasons. In the winter of 1921 after Atkins and his aides had succeeded in organizing some dozen klaverns in and about Philadelphia and Chester counties, and had a good beginning made in his campaign for members, there occurred a conspiracy in which the highest state officials (Grand Dragons) of the five states north of the Ohio River and the Mason's and Dixon's Line participated. They intended to break off relations with the South, wrest control of their respective states from Simmons and Clarke and keep the money which they had hitherto been obliged to send to Atlanta. This was an amount equal to approximately one-half of their total income and would have represented a considerable saving to them if the break had been successfully consummated.

Not being well planned, their attempt was abortive. In Pennsylvania, for instance, Atkins had not secured the approval of Rich or even of all of his own organizers in the Philadelphia District and so was unable to carry his own organization along with him. Rich, sensing his opportunity, remained loyal to Atlanta and received his reward when, Atkins having been dismissed, his jurisdiction was widened to include the entire State.

Unfortunately the affair had another aspect. Atkins not only left the State but, being in a vindictive mood, took with him the entire amount of accumulated funds of his district which Rich estimated to be between \$25,000 and \$35,000. More serious than



this loss, however, was the removal or destruction of the records, including the membership rolls, as well as records of receipts and expenditures. This opened the way for numerous claims against the Order and necessitated time and energy in reorganization which might have been spent more profitably in expansion. To Shoemaker and Cotton was entrusted most of this work, although Peebles and Frazier also spent considerable time in eastern Pennsylvania after Atkins' dismissal.

Evidently affairs were in a state of general confusion. Cotton and Shoemaker spent many weeks hunting up old members and trying to get the klaverns reorganized, a task which entailed some immediate sacrifice of profits, since the commissions of the Kleagles depended solely upon new members. "Many times we were so low in cash," commented Shoemaker, "that we would match to see who would buy the glass of milk."<sup>4</sup> It is due historical accuracy, however, to note that in view of their subsequent enthusiasm for the Klan, the small remuneration which they received during these lean months was by no means typical.

Another change in leadership took place beginning January 1, 1923, when Morris E. Freeman of the Indiana realm was appointed Imperial Representative over eastern Pennsylvania. This change proved of small value for the success of the movement. As the year wore on to a close, charges against Freeman's administration grew more and more numerous. The chief item in these indictments was the mismanagement of the monies of the province. His enemies held that, like the provincial governors of Imperial Rome, he was trying to make himself wealthy in a single year. While they did not usually object to a little milking, they rebelled at being stripped. Freeman had some friends who, in his defense, said that he was a victim of other Klan officials who were eager for his place.

Both his friends and enemies were doubtless correct. Sam Rich was awake to the possibilities of the situation, at any rate. He sent A. L. Cotton into his colleague's province to "gumshoe around" and, if possible, to get things into his control. Cotton, although he expressed regret regarding his breach of formal etiquette in playing the spy upon one whom he counted as his friend, carried out his superior's orders. In consequence Rich regained eastern Pennsylvania on January 1, 1924. Whereupon

Cotton was promoted to the position of Chief of Staff in Charge of Propagation in this area, retaining in addition six counties in the western part of the state.

Added to this frequent change of leadership, there was another factor which handicapped the rapid growth of the Klan in the East, viz., the intractable "Dutch." Cotton and his associated Kleagles were a long time learning to work with them. Militant Protestants with all the inherited prejudices of their persecuted ancestors, the "Pennsylvania Dutch" were easily persuaded to join in the Klan's anti-Catholic crusade. Naturally clannish they listened with interest and approval to exhortations for an increase of the spirit of fraternity and of high loyalty of man to man, but they resented the demand that they give blind military obedience to the realm officials even though the majority of Klansmen throughout the State had been willing to give it.

To any one of the klaverns in the Pittsburgh district, Rich or Cotton could give an order with practical certainty that it would be carried out without challenge to their authority. To their chagrin they found that this was not true in the German sections from Lancaster and Lebanon to Allentown. As an example, the realm office had been accustomed to a high-handed policy relative to the granting of charters, allowing their issuance or not as it chose. The Allentown klavern had its own ideas about the matter and expressed them freely. After some difficulties, Lemuel Peebles was sent to "lay down the law." As he relates it:

"Cotton and Shoemaker had both gotten in bad and then I went down. Boy! Did I get in Dutch too! They were a bunch of sincere fellows who didn't like to be dictated to—'Dutchmen' you know. They could be led but not driven. Cotton had tried to drive them. I made a big speech all about the great size of the organization; how the leaders were brainy men—had to be, or they could never have developed such an organization. I told them that here at Allentown they were acting as if they knew more than the state officials who had built up the Order. Well, they just sat and listened. I could see they weren't with me. One of them finally got up and said, 'Will you sit down and let me talk a while?' He began telling me what the situation was there. I saw that I had to change my mind, so I said,

'Well, up at the State office they didn't know that.' I promised that I would deliver the charter. They wanted to know when. So I had to fix a date."

Finally the state leaders learned to allow the "Dutch" a freer hand and they became the most loyal of all Klansmen within the Realm, and their organizations survived the disruption that was later to destroy the State organization and most of the local klaverns as well.

In spite of mistakes and changes in leadership, membership in the eastern province did grow although it reached its peak a year later than in the western province. At its height, the roll of active members totaled some ninety or ninety-five thousand of whom a third were in and about Philadelphia and its suburbs. Other centers of activity were Schuylkill, Luzerne and Carbon counties with their mining areas and large foreign population, and the Lehigh Valley where the Klan was quite strong.

The problem of determining the membership of the Klan in the State when official records are unavailable is complicated by two factors. One was the practice of the organizers to claim an exaggerated number on the theory that nothing is more potent for the success of an organization than the appearance of success. The other was the desire of officials to minimize the enrollment in their reports to their superiors in order to avoid remittance of full amounts of monies collected. Very inaccurate records were kept by some officials for this reason and, when kept, were conveniently lost on occasion.

A controversy growing out of such a situation took place in the late summer of 1923 between Sam Rich and his immediate superior D. C. Stephenson. It sheds some light on the possible membership of the Klan in Pennsylvania at that time. Rich claimed that only 260,000 members had been taken into the Order in his realm. This, of course, included withdrawals and members not in good standing, as well as the active members at the time. Stephenson charged Rich with failure to report 60,000 members, in order to avoid the necessity of paying him the amount of money due on these memberships. No records were found to prove Stephenson's contention and when he resigned from the Klan in the autumn of that year the matter was dropped.<sup>6</sup> It seems reasonable to believe that Rich, in this in-

stance, would have no reason to exaggerate the membership in his report to Stephenson and that 260,000 may therefore be considered a basis for estimating the minimum number enrolled in the Klan prior to July, 1923.

In explaining the growth of the Ku Klux Klan membership in Pennsylvania to a number in excess of 260,000, its general statement of principles is important. These were the stock in trade of a host of Klan lecturers and pamphleteers. If the speaker was familiar with the special likes and aversions of the community, he selected from among the Klan principles the ones which most nearly corresponded and explained them at length. If unfamiliar with the community he usually spoke in general terms about them all. With rousing idealism, diluted often by bits of crass realism the better to hold attention, the orators discoursed upon their themes ending, usually, with some variation of the following:

"These are the principles of true Americanism. These are the principles of the Christian religion. If you are a patriot, if you are a Christian, then you belong with thousands of your fellows in the Ku Klux Klan who aren't ashamed to defend the old U. S. A. and to stand up for their religion."

Then as a final touch, the impressive language of a foreign phrase:

"You, too, should write across your escutcheon: Non Silba sed Anthar."<sup>7</sup>

And after the hush and the burst of applause, Klansmen, scattered through the audience, served as translators for any who might wish such erudition made simple.

Indeed, the mass of listeners found little wrong with the innocuous statements of beliefs and purposes which clever speakers colored with the hue most suited to the community in which they spoke. Not trained to cull the demagoguery from sounding rhetoric or even to suspicion it, the average Pennsylvanian swallowed wholesale such pronouncements as that of the circuit rider and history professor who, as founder and Imperial Wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan proclaimed:



"To the lovers of Law, Order, Peace and Justice of all People, Tribes, and Tongues of the whole earth, Greetings:

"I, and the citizens of the Invisible Empire through me, make declaration to you:

"We, the members of this Order, desiring to promote patriotism toward our Civil Government; honorable peace among men and nations; protection for and happiness in the homes of our people; manhood, brotherhood, and love among ourselves, and liberty, justice and fraternity among all mankind; believing we can best accomplish these noble purposes through a mystic, social, patriotic, benevolent association, having a perfected lodge system, with an exalted ritualistic form of work and an effective form of government, not for selfish profit, but for the mutual benefit, betterment and protection of our oath-bound associates, and their loved ones; do physically, socially, morally and vocationally proclaim to the world that we are dedicated to the sublime duty of providing generous aid, tender sympathy and fraternal assistance amid fortune and misfortune, in the effulgent light of life and amid the sable shadow of death; and to the exalted privilege of demonstrating the practical utility of the great (yet most neglected), doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man as a vital force in the lives and affairs of men.

"We invite all men who can qualify to become citizens of the Invisible Empire to approach the portal of our beneficent domain, join us in our noble work of extending its boundaries, and in disseminating the gospel of "Klankraft," thereby encouraging, conserving, protecting and making vital the fraternal relationship in the practice of an honorable clannishness; to share with us the glory of performing the sacred duty of protecting womanhood; to maintain forever the God-given supremacy of the white race; to commemorate the holy and chivalric achievements of our fathers; to safeguard the sacred rights, privileges and institutions of our Civil Government; to bless mankind and to keep eternally ablaze the sacred fire of a fervent devotion to a pure Americanism.

"The Invisible Empire is founded on sterling character, and immutable principles based upon sacred sentiment and cemented by noble purposes. It is promoted by a sincere unselfish devotion of the souls of men, and is governed by their consecrated intelligence. It is the soul of chivalry, virtue's impenetrable shield; and the devout impulses of an unconquered race,"<sup>8</sup>

At "open meetings" of the Order, curious visitors were usually circularized with sheets upon which appeared the Klan articles of faith, assertions of belief in:

- "The tenets of the Christian Religion.
- White Supremacy.
- Protection of our pure womanhood.
- Just laws and liberty.
- Closer relationship of Pure Americanism.
- The upholding of the Constitution of these United States.
- The Sovereignty of our State Rights.
- Freedom of Speech and Press.
- Closer relationship between Capital and American Labor.
- Preventing the causes of mob violence and lynchings.
- Preventing of unwarranted strikes by foreign labor agitators.
- Preventing of fires and destruction of property by lawless elements.
- The limitation of foreign immigration.
- The much needed local reforms.
- Law and Order."

When the Kleagle, flushed with enthusiasm for the virtues of his Order—not to mention its possibilities as a business enterprise—read again this list of principles and asked with challenging voice, "Friend, where do you line up?" the average citizen was defenseless. Not trained in the various uses of language, he did not notice the meaninglessness of such generalities as "much needed local reform," "unwarranted strikes," "just laws," "pure Americanism," and "tenets of the Christian religion." He did not ask for more specific definition of terms nor inquire whether the Klan obligation and organization were consistent with "liberty."

The Klan organizers easily recognized the advantage of such generalities. While interpretations of "pure Americanism" or of "just laws" differed widely among Pennsylvanians, each was willing to hear them praised assuming that his own variety was "pure" and "just." Thus the Klan, in the hands of skillful organizers, could become literally all things to all native Protestants. Happy was the Kleagle who understood his area and the accepted beliefs of its people; it was profitable.

In the work of promotion, the state and national offices maintained, to assist their Kleagles, a group of speakers, some of

whom pledged themselves to fill speaking engagements at their convenience at a guaranteed fee per address. A large part of this group of speakers consisted of ministers who found such remuneration a welcome addition to their small salaries. Moreover, the ministers were generally the most successful type of lecturer and indirect evidence, perhaps, that a large number of those who joined the Klan thought that they were supporting Christian idealism when they paid their initiation fees.

In singing the praises of the Klan, these speakers plucked a harp of powerful prejudices. To the accompaniment of the twin strings of "white supremacy" and, by inference from the principles of "limitation of immigration," Nordic supremacy, whole hymns of racial exultation were sung. Fervent anthems were raised to glorify "the Constitution" and its "pure Americanism," as contrasted with socialism, communism and the mouthings of "foreign agitators." The "protection of our pure womanhood" and the "prevention of the *causes* of mob violence and lynching" (not the lynching) were themes for many a spicy and sentimental composition. But more frequently than all others were intoned variations of the religious theme—witty ditties about the caprices of some priest or prelate and solemn dirges warning of the doom of Protestantism if left undefended by stalwart Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

Many speakers were complete failures and were soon weeded out. Some remained in service and soon gained in popularity. Rev. J. W. Dempster, Rev. Fred R. Dent and Rev. J. F. Daugherty—"the three D's that were better than D.D.'s,"—Rev. J. S. Strayer, Rev. Bruce Lehman, Rev. J. E. Flemming, Rev. Hartranft and Rev. G. A. Williams were among the ministers who were highly regarded by the state officials. From outside the State came numerous lecturers of whom James A. Comer, from the Atlanta office, and Thomas A. Heflin, of Alabama, were acceptably received.

The procedure which characterized the most successful speakers was soon in common use. It was partly necessitated by a rough sense of justice and fair play which, while common in a measure to most peoples, is peculiarly characteristic of the native American. Developed in America's broad frontier areas where caste and aristocracy of birth did not survive, it still remains a part of

the cultural heritage as is shown by the sympathy generally given by the mass of Americans to the underdog, the fellow whom they feel hasn't had a fair chance.

The strategy of the Klan orator was, then, to cast the native white Protestant not as belonging to the predominant and controlling group as is the case throughout most of our area, but as the poor, oppressed sufferer, plundered by foreigners, tricked by "Jesuits" and robbed of his birthright by scheming descendants of Abraham. If a Klan spokesman could make Catholic, alien and Negro appear in the role of aggressors, these groups became the villains of the drama and the sympathies of the audience would automatically descend upon the nativists, demand for them "simple justice and a square deal," and justify a defensive attack against their enemies.

A specific example from the literature of the movement will clarify this point. In flat denial of the claim that the Klan was "the most American of all patriotic orders" many of its critics condemned it for being aggressively un-American. Thus W. L. Pattangall, defining Americanism as a spirit which "cannot tolerate caste or religious distinctions in politics, social life, or legal standing, (and which) especially cannot for a moment endure the breeding and exploitation of hatred and prejudice as a means to swing public opinion and political power," indicted the Order for doing just these things which, he added, "it makes a virtue of doing."<sup>10</sup>

The reply to this charge, entitled "The Klan: Defender of Americanism," and credited to H. W. Evans' authorship, illustrates the typical Klan strategy. This was to maneuver the opponent into a position of attacking Americanism and the Klan into the "Defender of Americanism." The author in this instance accepted the definition of Americanism made by his critic (with a minor qualification) "not merely as an abstraction to be talked about, but as a heritage to be fought for." "The Klan" he continued, "finds all these violations of Americanism being practiced deliberately and persistently" by other groups whereas his Order "makes a principle and a duty of resisting them."<sup>11</sup>

Condemned for intolerance Evans replied that it is not un-American to be intolerant of intolerance. If the Klan is intoler-



ant when it condemns those groups which subvert Americanism, it is proud of it.

"In a nation toleration becomes a vice when fundamentals are in danger . . . The American liberals . . . have extended their liberality till they are willing to help the aliens tear at the foundations of the nation. They have become one of the chief menaces of the country, instead of the sane intellectual leaders they should be . . . They give an almost joyous welcome to alien criticism of everything American. The unopposed attack on the Puritan conscience is only one illustration; our liberals today seem ashamed of having any conscience at all . . . Tolerance is more prized by them than conviction."<sup>12</sup>

This thrust at American liberals is significant and reveals an adroitness which effectively strengthened the Klan case. Culturally the Klan represented the status quo elements in the state and nation. Old line stalwart conservatives, Klansmen were disturbed and angered to see divergent religious groups, peoples with collectivist ideas of government or with different economic and social standards becoming an increasingly larger element in Pennsylvania's population, especially in the industrial and mining areas where they definitely challenged the culture which "the fathers" had built up. The Klan's real appeal was to the group of Americans who were opposed to cultural change and to those reactionaries who wished to bring back the good old days before the so-called "new immigration." It is quite understandable, in view of this fact, why liberals were considered worse than foreigners. They were among "the chief menaces" because, being natives yet welcoming change, they became traitors to their own kindred.

That there was strategic advantage in the Klan's position is obvious. Status quo groups, no matter what methods they use, can deny that they are aggressors. They always defend; they always protect what is or was. Their attacks are always counter-attacks to regain lost territory; their campaigns against the foe are never for the purpose of forcing the foe to change but always for the purpose of making their own treasured possessions or culture secure.

The opponent of the Klan might deny outright the value which Klansmen placed upon the cultural heritage passed down from

the fathers. He would then deny the premises of the Klan ideology. Although this was the most direct and most logical form for criticism to take, in most communities it was not used. The offending critic who used it was usually thrown without the city gates and verbally stoned to death. There was too much ancestor worship in the average native to permit such "base slander."

The more tactful critic launched his attack not at the premises of the movement but at the methods which were used by its members. In this case too, the natural defenses were strong. Many people firmly believed that a good end generally justified the means. At any rate, if your enemy used unethical methods as was the case, for instance, when poison gas was first used in the World War, the only alternative to retaliation in kind was the sacrifice of your cause. That "Jesuit trickery" deserved to be countered with "masked violence" was accepted without argument. He was a mollicoddle or "a spineless liberal" who refused to so defend the faith of his fathers and his country's institutions.

To be sure, the Klan was obliged, in order to justify some of its methods, to claim that the opposition groups used methods which were worse. As a consequence the Klan gave widest publicity to and even exaggerated the faults of its opponents at the same time minimizing or maintaining a stony silence about their virtues. Unfortunately, the average Klansman, schooled in the over-simplified ethics of American cinema plots with their totally black villains and lily white heroes, was ready to believe the entire heirarchy of the Catholic Church as basely villainous as the scoundrels whom some lecturer had unearthed from the vast annals of that institution to demonstrate his point; to picture most Jews whom they did not know as murderers of prophets or as crafty Shylocks; and to regard all foreigners not among their personal acquaintances as plotting to undermine the foundations of the Commonwealth.

The Klan's critics could and did deny the one-sidedness and the exaggeration of this picture but since they admitted the partial truth of the Klan charge, the effectiveness of their criticism was weakened. It was waived aside as lacking insight. Such critics, Klansmen were told, did not know the inside facts. Too ready

to think well of their enemies, they were unaware of the secret machinations which more watchful eyes perceived. The policy of the enemies of American institutions was always to act the part of loyal citizens in public while they carried out their evil designs behind drawn blinds and closed doors.

The belief in the minds of the nativists that there was a serious plot against American ideals and institutions, the success of which only immediate organization and united action could prevent, was as important for the growth of the Ku Klux Klan as the belief in the Devil and his angels was for the growth of the medieval Christian Church. It was the *sine qua non* of its existence. There was a considerable number of Pennsylvanians who had been influenced by the A.P.A. movement, who had come under the influence of periodicals of *The Menace* type, or had read the publications of the *Rail Splitter Press* (Milan, Ill.). These found the Klan an institution which gave expression to sentiments already formed and so needed no urging to join it. There were thousands of others, however, who learned for the first time in Klan meetings that their ideals and culture were in danger.

That they were so credulous of such statements may be partially explained by the fact that the period of Klan growth was coincident with a period of post war economic depression. The cost of living had risen. General disillusionment and fear was common. All foreigners were suspected and the ugly clouds of popular unrest were crackling with a high potential of hatred. The fact that Pennsylvania decisively rejected Wilson and his League in the 1920 elections, bade godspeed to Palmer in his heresy hunt and rejoined with New York in its enactment of the Lusk laws was significant of the temper of the times and of the willingness of the people to find a scapegoat upon whom to blame their troubles and against whom to discharge their pent up emotions.

It was also a time when the crusading spirit was running high. The war for Americans had not been a war of exhaustion and the high idealism with which pulpit and propaganda had fortified the conscripted soldiers was by no means spent. The growth of the Klan will not be understood unless it is recognized that the reforming zeal which, during the war, was directed toward the

illusory hope of ridding the world of autocratic and irresponsible government and its by-product of aggressive war, was given new object and goal by the Klan leaders.

To characterize the Ku Klux Klan as a reform movement may recall an expression of that cynical stalwart Conkling when he called reform "the last refuge of the scoundrel." Indeed, the Klan did often demonstrate how bad reform may be. Nevertheless, no other theme stands out so clearly from the discussions regarding the Order which the writer has had with Klansmen all over the state of Pennsylvania than the desire for reform. Other motives were undeniably interwoven with it: the desire for personal gain, the love of display, the thrill of excitement, the satisfaction which comes from having power over one's fellow-men. Still, in the varied activities of the Klan, from the worst instances of kidnapping and cruelty to their hymn singing and educational meetings, the least common denominator of their programs of action was the idea of reform.

Moreover, the Klan's reform program was not the idle purring of a high powered emotional engine. The engine was usually in gear. It found expression in deeds and in this it was well adapted to the post-war days when thousands of men had been schooled in methods of direct action in camp and trench. The Klan claimed to be "the only order of men . . . who have organized themselves for . . . the *militant defense, fulfillment and enforcement* of Protestant Americanism . . . It is *militantly operative*."<sup>13</sup>

"The Klan stood for the same things as the Church," boasted one Exalted Cyclops,<sup>14</sup> "but we did things the Church wouldn't do. They talked about morals in the churches, but if some young fellow got into trouble or some couple was about to get a divorce, the churches wouldn't mess in it. We acted. There are at least five couples in this community that were having domestic trouble which we helped straighten out." This quotation is typical. Klansmen as a group did not come from the more intellectual classes who would be interested in the theory of government. They neither understood nor cared about such topics as the reform of the jury system or the consolidation of township government. Any suggestion of "constitutional reform" would only have frightened them and aroused their hostility.



Most Klansmen were interested in the more personal aspects of evil whether it was found in public officials or in their neighbors. The official who accepted bribes or who discriminated against the native Protestant or gave evidence of partiality to a Catholic, Jew or foreigner was watched, warned, and if unreformed, opposed at the next election. Neighbors, too, if they broke the recognized ethical codes of the community, were often reprimanded or threatened. Especially was this true if the offender was foreign born, colored, or of a differing faith. It was more difficult to get action against one of their own kind; rarely indeed were offending Klansmen punished except with dismissal from the Order.

Typical were the following cases which are set down as nearly as possible in the language in which they were told the author.

"Recall the two nigger whore-houses opposite the school house at McKees Rocks? Why even the school teachers were being bothered. We tried but couldn't get the Law to act, so one night, eight of us visited the place. We came in two big Packards. We had brought two crosses all wrapped and soaked and ready to burn which we planted, one in front of each house. We set fire to them and then rode off and loafed around town for a while. About one o'clock we came back to see what was going on. Pretty soon we saw one of the boogies open the door a little and look through the crack to see if anyone was around, then make off up the street with her suitcase. It wasn't long until another curly head came out; then in a little while, another. There was an early morning train due at 2:30 and they were making for the station. That train carried the whole bunch of them away that night."<sup>15</sup>

"And you remember the Greek at Finleyville who was messing around with the little girl? Boy! Did he make a quick get-away!"<sup>16</sup>

"And the nigger living with the white widow-woman? It didn't take him long to pack up either."<sup>17</sup>

X "Then there was the case of 'Chief' Hughes, a nigger ex-policeman at Kenneywood Park. He still had his badge and had been collecting graft from couples for several years. Couples would go up in the field near the park to pet. This nigger had a bunch of kids parked around the field to give him the high sign. He would then come up, show his badge and tell the couple they were under arrest. He would hand them a regular line about how he supposed it would be

embarrassing for their names to appear in the papers—especially the girl's name, so maybe it could be fixed up if they chose. In this way he had been collecting ten or fifteen dollars, sometimes as high as twenty-five dollars, to let the couple off. Well, we took the matter to Chief Detective Robert Brown, of Allegheny County, but he wouldn't do anything with it. If we got more evidence, he said, then he might handle it. We brought a whole crew, the Homestead Wreckers among them, and scattered them through the Park one Sunday. We caught the gentleman in the act but the detective they had sent got yellow and wouldn't make the arrest.

"Then we got the promise of detective Prosser. We had to go for him but he was one of the best. This time we had the thing planned. Eddie Burns, a little fellow, dressed up in his sister's clothes and made a good looking sweetie. We sent him up in the field with a big six-footer and they began loving it up. Pretty soon the big nigger came up to them and, flashing his badge, said, 'You are under arrest.'

"We had given the six-footer a five dollar bill which we had taken to the bank to have marked for identification and we had ourselves marked it. Well they came down the road, the nigger reeling off his line.

"'I usually get twenty-five for this.'

"'But I have only five. Can't you let us off for that?'

"They had a big argument but finally the nigger agreed and took the money. Just about that time up stepped Prosser and put him under arrest. We hustled him into my car and started for the jail. He began spouting off and attempted to take a pass at one of us. He was soon shown that that wouldn't work. Then he changed his tune and tried to honey up to us, finally pulled a bottle of whiskey out of his pocket and offered it around. Nobody would take any. When he offered it to me, I said 'Sure!' and put the bottle in my pocket. He raised a fuss and I told him, 'No, I'll just keep this for further evidence.'

"Well, to shorten the story, the 'Chief' was convicted and got—I've forgotten how long—but anyway he died in jail. We got three kids, too, who had been helping him. One of them was sent to Morganza."<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the cases where the Klan either aided the Law or took matters into its own hands because of the Law's delays or failure to act at all, there were other cases where wrong was acknowledged to exist but the law was incapable of acting. As one judge reported to Stanley Frost: "One of the things that

makes a judge's life hard is the wrongs for which there is no legal remedy; the unfair but not criminal methods of slick crooks, the betrayals of women where more harm than good is done if the law is called in, the oppression of the money lenders, the laziness of men who let their children starve—all so common we take them for granted—I can't do anything about them."<sup>19</sup> Some local klaverns tried to deal with this class of evils more than with any other kind, and the success which met their efforts in this regard was the basis of the confident assertions of scores of Klansmen that "The Klan did aid my community." For example, the Exalted Cyclops of Lincoln Klan confided:

X "There was a poor woman over by the mountain not far from Laurelville whose husband had deserted her. She and her small children were living in a place hardly fit for animals. We sent investigators over and they found the children so undernourished as to be literally starving. The woman told us a sad story. Her husband was a loafer and had recently 'pulled out'—had gone to a neighboring state. Since there he had sent nothing to his family. We took the trouble to locate him and ordered him to return home. We made it plain that it was high time for him to straighten up and take care of his family. He came, too. He knew it would be much better for him if he did."<sup>20</sup>

The same swaggering but apparently effective action was taken by another klavern near Pittsburgh:

X "In this town there was a shiftless man by the name of ..... He wasn't getting along. His five children were in want. We investigated and took them about ten dollars worth of food, enough to tide them over a little time.

"The way we did it was this: First a man in civilian clothes came to the door and told the family that they were about to have visitors; that these visitors would be dressed a little differently from the ordinary but that they were not to be frightened on this account as the visitors were their friends. If they thought the children might be frightened, they could put them to bed or in the back of the house.

"Five of us came in our robes and looked the place over. Of course we already knew the shape it was in and their condition. We had found a job for the man, too, and had coached the speakers upon what to say.

"'What was needed?'" one of us finally asked in solemn voice. They replied that they were about to be turned out of the house. They were back three months' rent and the landlord was demanding payment. It was evident, too, that They needed clothes.

"'What is the matter? No work? . . . Well, have you tried to find work?'"

"'Sure. Been everywhere hunting a job. All the plants are running full. They're not taking on any new men.'"

"'We tried to find out just where he had applied for work and he named a few places but I think he was lying.'"

"'Now we are going to help you,' we said. 'You go down to such-and-such a plant tomorrow and ask for work. We hear they are taking on a few men down there.'"

"'But they wouldn't take me,' he objected. 'I've never dug coal.'"

"'That's all right; you go down and see what work they have. And if you can't get fixed up there go to . . .'" and we named two other places.

"'Well, we had it all fixed up and he got work all right. But after about a week he failed to show up at his work. We went around to see him.'"

"'What's the trouble? Sick?'"

"'No,' he said, 'but I'm pretty sore. I thought I ought to rest up a little.'"

"'Well we advise you to go back to your job . . .'" He took the hint and finally the landlord got his rent and the family had something to live on."

Then to point the moral, the Klansman who told the incident added:

"Now you see that was a case where the Law wasn't as good as our action. The only thing the wife could have done was to sue him for non-support. Then if she had gotten a judgment it would have meant only a measly three dollars a week which wouldn't have kept her family. We kept the home together as well as provided for their needs."<sup>21</sup>

While some action closely resembling the above instances was taken by almost every klavern throughout the State, the requests which the local organizations received for such action were much more numerous. John C. Miles, ex-mayor of Wilkinsburg and a prominent member of the Klan in that place and throughout



western Pennsylvania, testified that "mothers and fathers would beg the Klan to instill the fear of God into wayward children who were otherwise unmanageable. People would write in to us complaining of neighbors who disturbed the peace, of competitors who used unfair methods, of persons or establishments suspected of engaging in vice or immorality or boot-legging. They all asked the Klan to do something about it. A good many of these requests were anonymous and we disregarded them, of course. We acted on a few but the chief thing that impressed one was the confidence these people had in the ability of the Klan to get things done. They placed a much higher estimate on the Klan in this respect than they did in the ordinary processes of the law."<sup>22</sup>

### *References*

1. The fullest account the author has seen of the early days in Pennsylvania appears in a memorandum written by Van A. Barrickman from his personal experience as a member of the Order and from information gained in the conduct of Case 1897 in Equity, tried in the U. S. District Court in Pittsburgh, during which he served as chief attorney for the defense. This memorandum appeared in the personal papers of Rev. J. F. Strayer.
2. Information secured during a personal interview by the writer with Mr. A. L. Cotton.
3. Much statistical information is scattered through the testimony filed in the U. S. District Court offices, Post Office Building, Pittsburgh, relative to Case 1897 in Equity mentioned above. The New Kensington Klavern had an enrollment of over 1,000; Mt. Pleasant had 758 members; Homestead nearly 1,000; Altoona was the largest Klavern in the State in 1926.
4. From a personal interview by the writer with Joseph Shoemaker.
5. From a personal interview by the writer with Lemuel Peebles.
6. Testimony of Roy Barclay who was employed as an investigator by D. C. Stephenson. Part of the material appears in the Transcript of testimony for Case 1897 in Equity cited above. Some comes from a personal interview by the writer with Mr. Barclay.
7. This represents a generalization made by the writer from Klan lectures to which he personally listened as well as from the notes of other lectures which he has read.
8. William Joseph Simmons: Constitution of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, 1921 edition, p. 4-6.
9. From a Klan circular, Form P-217.
10. Forum 74/327.
11. Forum 74/806-ff.
12. Ibid, p. 808-ff.
13. Klan folder, Form C-100 (American Ptg. & Mfg. Co., Atlanta).
14. M. A. King, for five years Exalted Cyclops of Lincoln Klan.
15. Told by A. L. Cotton to Joseph Shoemaker in the presence of the writer.
16. Added by Joseph Shoemaker.
17. Added by A. L. Cotton.
18. Told to the writer by A. L. Cotton.
19. Outlook 136/183.
20. Told to the writer by the E. C. of Mt. Pleasant Klan.
21. Told to the writer by Harry Moore.
22. Told to the writer by John C. Miles.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE KLAN CHANGES HANDS:

#### PROGRESS IN PENNSYLVANIA UNDER THE EVANS REGIME

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*"Credulity is the common failing of inexperienced virtue."*  
—Samuel Johnson

*"When Dr. Johnson defined patriotism as the last refuge of a scoundrel, he was unconscious of the then undeveloped capabilities of the word 'reform.'"*  
—Roscoe Conkling

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In the autumn of 1922 occurred a struggle for the control of the national organization which resulted in the complete ousting of W. J. Simmons, its founder. There had risen within Klan circles a group of ambitious leaders who felt that the financial and political possibilities of the Order were being neglected. Responsibility for this situation was laid upon Simmons whose control over the organization as its Emperor and Imperial Wizard was as complete as he chose to make it. With little political vision and with a strain of idealism in his character, Simmons often did not see eye to eye with many of his subordinates who wished to use the Order to serve very realistic power and profit motives.

One of these leaders who chafed under Simmons's control was the National Secretary of the Organization, Hiram Wesley Evans. His rapid rise in the Texas Klan and his promotion to the national staff had only emphasized what his early experience as struggling dentist in Dallas had taught him, namely, that too rigid a standard of ethics was a luxury to be indulged in only by those who could afford it or by those who lacked ambition. H. C. McCall, formerly a deputy constable in Houston, but now high in the councils of the Klan in Texas, was of similar mind. In Arkansas, James A. Comer, former justice of the peace but now chief organizer of that state, was in a surly mood and welcomed a suitable change. By the time of the autumn Klonvokation (National Convention)

in November of 1922, these men, together with Kyle Ramsey, of Louisiana, and Fred L. Savage of the Georgia Office, had perfected a scheme to remove Simmons from power. Evans was eager for Simmons' place and confided to a friend that he had already begun to take Simmons' friends away from him by putting out "poison meat,"—tales derogatory to his character.<sup>1</sup>

As finally worked out, the plan was to rush to completion a division of Simmons' powers. Simmons had already complained of being over-worked and had spoken some time previously about the possibility of having separate individuals for Emperor and for Imperial Wizard. If they could act quickly before Simmons had matured his plans, the Evans group thought they might capture the office of Imperial Wizard with all its prerogatives and relegate Simmons to the Emperorship which could be made largely honorary. If successful, this arrangement would allow Simmons to continue to "unfold the spiritual philosophy" of the Klan, to supervise the ritualistic work and develop what were known as "the higher degrees," but would strip from him the general executive and financial control of the Order.

To make certain that their plan would not be blocked in the Klonvocation, it was necessary to get support for it from the North. Most influential and ambitious of all northern officials at the time was D. C. Stephenson, a young, powerfully built, personally attractive go-getter who, as Grand Dragon of Indiana, ruled over the largest and most effective Klan organization in the North which he hoped to whip into a powerful political machine. Bent upon having a free hand in his realm, his correspondence with Simmons' office had been bitterly critical of the restrictions placed upon him. Knowing this, the Evans group called him into conference on the eve of the Klonvocation and found him willing to bargain, albeit the fact that he was later given charge of promotion in twenty-three northern states shows that he set the price of his cooperation high.

In pursuance of their plan, a committee consisting of Fred L. Savage and D. C. Stephenson aroused Simmons from his bed at three o'clock one morning during the Klonvocation to persuade him that it was advisable to divide his duties and to have the Klonvocation select another person for the office of Imperial Wizard, for which office they urged him to recommend Hiram

Wesley Evans. They found Simmons courteous but unwilling to act. The necessary clause revising the Constitution was not yet ready. Besides he had hoped, when the change was made, to place Judge Grady, of North Carolina, in the office of Imperial Wizard.

The committee knew that a little pressure would have to be used upon him to secure the desired objective. As Simmons himself recalls the incident:

Mr. Savage became grave and very pointedly said, "Don't you permit your name to come before the Klonvokation (as Imperial Wizard). Now if you know of any one, Colonel, who is contemplating submitting your name, you go to him and stop him before the meeting."

I looked at him and said, "Why?" He said, "You know there are men here that are down here to raise hell," and he said, "We have information that if your name is mentioned on the floor of Klonvokation, there are men there who are going to get up and attack your character." And he said, "The minute your character is attacked there is going to be somebody killed. I have got men placed and have given orders to shoot and shoot to kill any damn man that attacks the character of Colonel Simmons. Consequently, a rough house is going to be provoked and the Klonvokation will be destroyed, and you know the newspaper men are here, and not being permitted to enter, they are sitting out there waiting, hoping that some friction will be started and the Klonvokation blow up, and we have had such a wonderful meeting so far, we can't afford for it to be broken up in a fight and bloodshed and possibly a killing. Now in order to preserve the harmony and the peace and the wonderful carrying on of the Klonvokation as we have it, let us beat those birds, and you give them a message in which you refuse to allow your name to come before them to succeed yourself."

After a few minutes' pause they (Savage and Stephenson) suggested that it would never do for the Klonvokation to be destroyed, that we would never come out from in under the disgrace of such an event, and for emergency purposes, asked me if I wouldn't name as my choice Hiram Wesley Evans, in order to meet the situation. I told them, as I have just stated, that there was nothing on the board against Hiram Wesley Evans and that possibly he might fit in in an emergency as he had knowledge of the workings of the office, had been there for a year with it. And Savage says, "Good! All we want to do is to meet the emergency and to avert this



crisis, and Dr. Evans will fit in temporarily until you can get a man to suit you."

I answered that by saying that I believed that would be all right under the circumstances. They said, "Then you name Dr. Evans as your successor?" I said, "Under the circumstances and the facts of this little conference here, I am agreeable to him."<sup>2</sup>

When the Klönvokation met later that day a new Imperial Wizard was chosen. Klansmen back in Pennsylvania were somewhat surprised when they learned that Hiram Wesley Evans was the man whose "official mandates, decrees, edicts, rulings and instructions" their oath now pledged them to obey. Shortly thereafter D. C. Stephenson was placed in charge of Pennsylvania and Sam D. Rich was now obliged to take orders from Columbus as well as from Atlanta.

In the South where the Klan had acquired an evil reputation under the Simmons-Clarke regime because of the prevalence of masked lawlessness, Evans promptly made an effort to increase the prestige of the Order by inaugurating a reform. He annulled Clarke's contract. When the Atlanta Klavern defended Clarke and demanded his reinstatement, Evans annulled its charter and ordered the Klavern disbanded. Charges were brought against Clarke for violation of the Mann Act—whether on a trumped up case or not is controversial—and his influence killed. Simmons, too, was soon persuaded to sell out his interest and retire from the organization. In addition, Evans commissioned General Nathan B. Forrest as Grand Dragon of Georgia with instructions to weed out Klan lawlessness from that state. General orders were given throughout all the realms providing that Klansmen deposit their robes with the door-keepers of their klaverns when leaving and forbidding Klansmen to have any regalia in their private possession without the permission of their Exalted Cyclops. It was hoped that this would check unauthorized Klan demonstrations and at the same time make it easier to apprehend any non-members who committed lawless acts while disguised as Klansmen.

In Pennsylvania, as elsewhere in the North, there had not yet occurred much lawlessness by Klansmen. Stephenson was, therefore, under no pressure to win back public approval by strict

measures. On the contrary, the advent of the new regime meant a relaxation of discipline. A. L. Cotton, who was familiar with the Klan's activities throughout most of the state, maintained that with Stephenson's assumption of control, money became the important thing. Under Simmons the lodge idea had been prominent and considerable attention had been paid by the organizers in Pennsylvania to the selection of desirable members and to ritualistic instruction. Klavern meetings were held regularly each week and initiations were generally held indoors and were well guarded. It had not been compulsory to buy robes during the Simmons regime, although a majority of Klansmen did purchase them through the Order at a price of five dollars each.

The change which occurred beginning with 1923 was described by Mr. Cotton as follows:

"When D. C. Stephenson came in we were ordered to call in our rituals, altar equipment and paraphernalia. Meetings were to be held monthly instead of weekly. Stephenson told us that the oath could be administered anywhere. The Klan was to be 'a movement' not 'an Order.' Now, everybody was supposed to buy robes. So the five dollars was just added to the initiation fee and the robe was sent automatically. The price of the robe was even raised to \$6.50 for a short time. Incidentally, we found out afterwards that the extra \$1.50 was to be divided equally between the Kleagle who got the member and the King Kleagle, Rich, but Rich kept it all.

"We did call in the rituals for about six weeks. During that time progress virtually ceased in Pennsylvania. The few members that did come in were not reported and the money was kept under another name. I, myself, went down to Evans to protest against Steve's methods but found that Evans was supporting him. Evans merely repeated the talk about how we wanted to make this into a great movement, not just a lodge. Rich, for his part, straddled. He tried to keep in the good graces of Evans and still keep his field force satisfied. All of us in the field at the time seriously objected to the abandonment of ritualistic work and the mere collection of money.

"We redistributed the rituals and kept on; but the same care was no longer given to the selection of members. Of course the membership grew. They came in by the hundreds; but the old spirit wasn't there."<sup>3</sup>

Coincident with the coming of the Evans-Stephenson regime occurred a change in the methods of propagation. Before 1923 there had been little variation from the following procedure: First a public meeting was held at which a speaker, preferably unknown to any of his audience and introduced under an assumed name, discussed the principles of the Order and the immediate need for action. At this time cards were passed and those interested were asked to give their names and addresses, their church affiliation and certain other pertinent details. Next the qualifications of those who had signified their interest were discussed in a meeting of the Klan and any questionable persons were referred to a Klokann committee for investigation. Finally, those believed desirable were personally solicited to join.

It required both time and skill for Klansmen engaged in soliciting to keep their affiliation with the Order a secret until certain that the prospective candidate was willing to join. At any rate it was far too slow a process to satisfy those leaders who wished to whip up a mass movement sufficiently large to secure for themselves the goals which ambition or cupidity had set. It was decided, therefore, to supplement this method with practices of demonstrated effectiveness when used by political campaigners, namely great open-air meetings advertised as "*MONSTER DEMONSTRATIONS*." To stimulate interest and help swell the attendance, urgent invitations were usually sent to every klan within driving radius. Handbills were often secretly distributed to all native-born Protestants and, where possible, newspapers were urged to print notices of such demonstrations in their news columns. "Eighteen Hundred Loaves of Bread for Klan Meet," headlined one friendly paper.<sup>4</sup> Then, days before the event, arrows would appear along the highways directing travellers to the site.

It was usually planned, if possible, to stage the gathering near the center of sufficient anti-Klan sentiment to provoke a counter demonstration. If this occurred, it was interpreted by the Klan leaders as unmistakable evidence of the danger to the country of all Catholics and aliens and of the need of a powerful Klan organization to combat these hostile groups. In any case the expectancy of trouble served to heighten the general excitement and provided a happy interlude to the dull ennui of small town

and village life from which most of the Klan membership came. Thrill seekers flocked to these demonstrations and Klan officials, if hard pressed to supply the thrills, were sometimes put to the expense of hiring an aviator to perform a few stunts above the crowd.

Often, as a part of the program, a huge initiation of scores or hundreds of men was staged. The setting was usually favorable: the dark night all around; the hillside lighted by giant crosses; robed and hooded men weaving through the crowd; shadows flickering; on the outskirts, uniformed men bearing arms guarding the site; the excited buzzing of voices punctuated perhaps by the sharp report of a pistol as some nervous guard fired to frighten a possible marauder; the gesticulating of a speaker to get attention from those whom his high-pitched voice did not attract. It was all very picturesque and calculated to free a man from his ordinary inhibitions.

There were those who came knowing that they were to be initiated. The various klaverns in the vicinity had postponed initiations for weeks to guarantee a large number of candidates for "the big night." Others had come only as friendly visitors. An appeal was frequently made to this group to join their fellows who were about to be initiated into the Order. If they were moved by the occasion and had the necessary fifteen dollars, investigation was waived, the oath administered without further routine and "the movement" enlarged.

After the initiation ceremonies and as a climax to the evening usually came the parade. There was the excitement of getting people into line, marshals shouting out commands, members hurrying to join their units, the roll of the drums for silence, the final order: "look straight ahead, follow your leaders and keep silence," and then the tramp of feet. Sometimes a band led the way. Then, in an automobile or two, came the dignitaries in their colored robes and the standard bearers with their lighted crosses. Following came robed and hooded men with only their shoes visible outside their skirts to give some hint of their social status. Sometimes, ordered to keep their visers up, only the men from distant delegations whose chance of recognition was small, appeared in the line of march. Once in the town there was the crowd which lined the sidewalks, silent like the marchers, or noisy with cheers



or curses as their prejudices decreed. Even if no untoward incident happened to add excitement to the event, the marchers always heard and saw enough to make conversation for days thereafter.

The Klansmen enjoyed these parades. If denied the privilege of parading, they felt that their rights as American citizens had been withheld and they often grew violent. This was the case at Carnegie.<sup>5</sup> On August 25, 1923, some ten thousand Klansmen gathered just outside the borough for a mass meeting and initiation, following which a parade through the town had been planned. Some excitement was anticipated for the town was divided almost equally into Catholic and Protestant sections. It was rumored that feeling was at fever height. After they had assembled, they were informed that the mayor of Carnegie, fearful of violence, had refused to grant the necessary permit for the parade. This sounded to the Klansmen like a Catholic challenge. The mood of the gathering grew ominous. Reports were carried to the officials that if the parade was not held the prestige of the Klan would be weakened and the crowd of friends disappointed. The Imperial Wizard, H. W. Evans, was present and hence in command. He held a hurried conference with Sam Rich, the State head, Roy Barclay, marshal of the parade and W. J. Dempster. It was decided to have the parade in defiance of the mayor.<sup>6</sup>

The direct route into the town crossed a bridge over the Pan Handle railway tracks. As the line moved down the hill, this narrow bridge was seen to be impassable having been blocked tight with trucks. The Klansmen detoured over an abandoned road to Glendale but the entrance from Glendale into Carnegie had to be made over a bridge which spanned the creek between the boroughs. Approaching the bridge, they were warned of opposition by an automobile which forced its way through the marching men. At the bridge another car was driven across the road to block the oncoming men. It was forcibly pushed to one side. As the hooded men crossed the bridge and entered Carnegie a shower of clubs and bricks rained upon them and at once everything at the head of the line was in confusion. Pressed from the rear by the advancing marchers, those at the front tried to force their way through the mob of several hundred men and boys who were massed in the street. Deputies who had been

called from Pittsburgh shouted for order but were helpless. Hoods were knocked off; robes torn. Four persons badly bruised were carried into a neighboring butcher shop. Others were taken to nearby doctors. When the marchers had succeeded in forcing their way for about a block and a half, shots rang out and a young Klansman, Thomas Abbott, fell to the street. Dr. Jones' office was nearest and he was carried there. Shot in the temple he died almost immediately.

The marchers in the rear had by this time reversed their direction and hastened back to their meeting place on the hill. Some of the hot heads who were well armed wanted to return to retaliate. Evans cautioned prudence and most of the Klansmen ran to their cars and drove away from the site before inquisitive police could line the highways and ask them embarrassing questions.

For the Klansmen who had been in the thick of the rioting, this incident provided more excitement than they had bargained for. Expecting resistance and willing enough to play at warfare, some had come with pockets bulging with automatic pistols; but they had not steeled themselves to use them with deadly intent. The shots which had been fired were doubtless discharged more from fright than from the desire to kill.

To compensate for torn clothes, battered heads and a murdered member, however, was the stimulating effect of the riot upon the enrollment of new Klansmen. Americans had been attacked. A ninety page booklet entitled *The Martyred Klansman* was distributed, giving in heroic style the Klan version of the incident and the testimony presented in the legal proceedings which followed. Its introduction explained that:

"This is the story of the murder of a native-born American in his native land, at the hands of a ruthless mob in Carnegie . . .

"It tells of the dastardly deeds of an enemy in trampling the Stars and Stripes of our country in the dust of the streets. It tells of the unwarranted attempts to injure native-born Americans, peaceably following the flag of our country and the Cross of Christ in a crusade for America. It tells of the reserved character of parading Klansmen as shown by their reluctance to commit violence, their earnest endeavor to keep within the law, even when *OLD GLORY* was

dragged to the ground, and when Americanism was suffering an open onslaught by its bitterest enemy within the confines of our country . . .”

With romantic embellishment, the story of Carnegie was retold many times to possible recruits. Many were stirred with resentment against the “dirty papists” and joined in the movement to protect their common birthright. Evans is said to have remarked before leaving the field the night of the riot, although he subsequently denied having done it, that Abbott’s death would mean 25,000 new members for the Klan. If made, the statement was prophetic. Recruits flocked into the Order in the surrounding districts and the organizers became, at least temporarily, affluent. Local Kleagles in other areas welcomed more of these incidents in order that they, too, might profit.

Scottdale was first to attempt its repetition. The neighboring town of Everson was overwhelmingly Catholic, and consequently the schools and government of the town were controlled by the Catholic group. The Klan felt that a demonstration might serve to warn the Catholics that this was a Protestant country. Moreover, some Catholic youths of Everson had waylaid an automobile filled with Klansmen returning from a neighboring demonstration, had taken their regalia and with these had staged a hilarious early morning demonstration of their own. The prestige of the Scottdale Klavern had consequently suffered and this incident was another reason why local Klansmen wished to have a demonstration.

The date was set for the Saturday following the riot at Carnegie. Word went out to the other Klaverns that there was a tough bunch at Scottdale. Klansmen were urged to come in mass. As an inducement free refreshments were offered. The watchword was, “Remember Carnegie and Come Prepared.”

The community was agog with excitement for the entire week preceding the event. The burgess had issued a permit for the parade and the line of march was planned to pass the largest Catholic Church in the community. Father Lambing, its priest, was much disturbed and together with several of his more conservative members worked diligently to check some of his parishioners who had sworn that “no masked Klansmen would get

as far as Pittsburgh Street."<sup>7</sup> Klansmen, on their part, boasted that if one of their number fell, there would not be a Catholic left alive in Scottdale by the next morning.

The evening of the demonstration came. Cars marked with small American flags had followed the signs that pointed to Kelley Field all that day. When the time scheduled for the parade had arrived, at least three thousand Klansmen and Klan sympathizers and almost as many Catholics lined the streets. The Klansmen in the crowd had been instructed to be on the watch for any onlookers whose speech or actions showed that they intended violent action, to gather around them and be ready to prevent it. Roofs and windows were full of organized groups prepared for action if either side committed an overt act. The street lights over a part of the town unexpectedly went out for a short time and increased the nervousness of the onlookers. The Secretary of the Scottdale Klan testified that covered trucks containing Klansmen and equipped with machine guns were parked on the hill which dominated the Catholic Church and parsonage.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, some two hours after the time scheduled, the marchers were sighted. A State Trooper led the way. Roy Barclay, Lemuel Peebles, H. C. Howard and Harry Bolan, all of Pittsburgh, immediately followed. But the line was disappointingly short. Most of the marchers were those who had just been initiated. A few more State Troopers were stationed at intervals among them and "the Homestead Wreckers" who boasted of their courage were also in line. Altogether there were only 1236<sup>9</sup> in the line of march and none of them were masked. They encountered no opposition. Having finished the parade they returned unharmed to their place of meeting.

If the violence at Carnegie was a surprise to many the absence of violence was as much of a surprise at Scottdale. Before the parade there had been divided council at Kelley Field. James A. Miller, who, as Exalted Cyclops of the local Klavern, had been eager for a chance to demonstrate the power of his organization, had changed his mind and counselled against having the parade at all. Thoroughly frightened he refused to march. Out-of-town officials who were less conscious of the existing feeling in the community wished to go through with the original plans. The situation was saved by a detail of State Police. They offered to



participate in the parade but ordered that the marchers must leave off their masks. This automatically cut down the size of the parade for none dare march if the prospect of recognition was great. Many local Klansmen heaved deep sighs of relief for in spite of their boasting they had no real desire to become possible targets for bullets. On the other hand, to antagonistic Catholics and their friends, the small group of unmasked marchers appeared an insufficient challenge to provoke them to action.

A little excitement was provided after the paraders had returned to Kelley Field. Several foolhardy boys, wondering what the result would be, fired a shot from the nearby car tracks toward the gathering. Instantly there was a heavy volley from the guards at the Field and before the boys could get behind the sheltering embankment, one had received a flesh wound. Klansmen had difficulty in magnifying this incident into the proportions of an attack. The way many of them felt about it was expressed in the testimony of Roy Barclay, one of the staff from the State Office who led the parade. "And what happened at Scottdale?" the attorney inquired. "That was a disappointment," replied Barclay. "There was only a little skirmish . . . We went there expecting to defend ourselves . . . and there was no trouble." <sup>10</sup>

If the Klansmen were anxious for trouble, they encountered it a few months later at Lilly, a town along the Pennsylvania railroad in Cambria County. Here the Klan made the serious mistake of holding a demonstration where there was not sufficient local sentiment in the community itself to support it and to keep opposition in check. Lilly was largely Catholic in population and the four hundred Klansmen who had chartered a special train from Johnstown and had come up to "give the Micks something to think about," appeared to the Catholic leaders like a foreign invasion and challenged them to action.

The Klansmen who had donned their regalia in the train and had marched to their meeting place found the hostility of the crowd which followed them ominous. They decided it would be best to curtail their meeting and reboard their train. They were obliged to return through darkened streets for the town lights had been turned off. Flashlights, however, were directed upon their faces and curses toward their ears. Rioting began when, near the depot, a stream of water from a fire-hose was turned

upon them. Some Klansmen attempted to seize the hose. One was shot through the arm. Many were injured, both of Klansmen and of their opponents. One Klansman, a Mr. Poorbaugh, subsequently died from injuries received during the rioting.<sup>11</sup>

As is common in most cases of this kind, each side in the conflict stoutly maintained that the other was the aggressor. Nor were they hypocritical in their attitudes. They believed it. Among the Klansmen who participated in these parades, the prevalence of fear was general. They thought that they were in danger of personal injury. Officials apparently never encouraged them to attack opposing groups—only to defend themselves in case of attack. The few cases of rioting which took place were, of course, magnified for propaganda purposes and this stimulated fear among the credulous. Likewise the suggestion, constantly repeated, "Come prepared! We may need to defend ourselves!" could not help but create suspicion. One Exalted Cyclops whose connection with the Klan was well known throughout his community never ventured forth from his home without a pistol. When he took off his coat in Klavern meeting, there it was hanging under his arm. If he had said nothing about it, the suggestive effect of his example upon his own Klansmen must, nevertheless, have been great.

It is small wonder, then, that Klansmen attended the parades and outdoor meetings with arms. Testifying about a demonstration in Reading, Klansman L. D. Peebles said, "Everybody was pretty heavily armed . . . There was, as I recall, 2500 to 3000 people there . . . (They had) all manner of defense, anyways from Krag Jorgensens to a lump of lead on a chain . . . (One man) had three Krag Jorgensen rifles in his Ford and six automatic pistols on himself . . . They were always, apparently, looking for outside interference."<sup>12</sup> At a Bristol (Bucks Co.) demonstration, police stopped automobiles containing Klansmen armed with revolvers and riot sticks.<sup>13</sup> At a Wilkinsburg (Allegheny Co.) parade, many Klanswomen who marched were armed with maple clubs which had been distributed to them prior to the parade and which they carried under their robes.<sup>14</sup> At a West Kittanning (Armstrong Co.) demonstration which was attended by some 25,000 Klansmen from three states, the men "had revolvers and

sawed off shotguns.”<sup>15</sup> The evidence showed that this practice was customary all over the state.

In their efforts to secure publicity the Klans were generally scornful of the local papers and in most cases would have experienced difficulty if they had tried to use them. Editors in the smaller towns usually ended the year with very narrow margins of profit. They could not afford to risk a boycott by either the pro-Klan or the anti-Klan elements in their communities and this would generally have occurred if they had taken a definite stand on the issue. In consequence, editor after editor studiously avoided any mention of the Klan either editorially or in his news columns unless a conspicuous public demonstration had been held.

Moreover, the Klan speakers and organizers, as a means of defense against a generally hostile metropolitan press, persistently told their hearers that they could not believe what they read in the daily papers, that the press was under the control of Catholics, Jews and foreigners even if it was not always owned by these groups. After the Carnegie and Lilly riots had been reported without mercy to Klan feelings, this charge was put forth more strongly than ever by the officials of the Order. To correct this situation a Daily Dispatch Publishing Company was incorporated in western Pennsylvania to print a Klan newspaper. The Realm officials urged the purchase of stock to finance this enterprise but in spite of liberal financial support from Klansmen, the company failed within a year because of mismanagement. When the *Keystone American*, which the national office had sponsored in 1924 and published for a short time in Washington, D. C., was discontinued, the Pennsylvania Realm was without an official publication of its own and had to rely upon other forms of publicity.

One of these was the burning of crosses. Planted high on some hill or mountain side and announced by exploding bombs or dynamite, a blazing cross seldom failed to bring people hurrying out to see it. While there were instances where crosses were burned primarily as a threat or warning, most of these demonstrations were inspired solely as a publicity device. Each Klan was instructed to burn at least four per year as a visible sign that the Order was functioning locally.<sup>16</sup> Orders were often sent from the Realm office for more spectacular displays. Harry E. A. McNeel, Kleagle in Armstrong County, was once ordered by

Sam D. Rich to burn a cross at every point in the county where there were organized Klans. In pursuance of this order he had fifty crosses burned simultaneously in that county.<sup>17</sup> Herbert C. Shaw, who succeeded Rich as Grand Dragon of the Realm, also believed in this form of publicity. On August 6, 1927, for example, he ordered a cross to be burned by every chartered Klan in the state. Indeed, of all the public activities of the Order, the one which came first to the minds of non-members when asked about the Klan was this practice of burning crosses which proved a most effective form of publicity. Unlike press copy, a burning cross left no permanent record which might later embarrass the Order and yet it set a thousand tongues wagging about the perpetrators of the deed and their possible intent.

From the foregoing it is evident that the transfer of the control of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan from William Joseph Simmons and his agent E. Y. Clarke to Imperial Wizard Hiram Wesley Evans, while marking a temporary reform in Klan practices in the South, was coincident with the opposite tendency in the Realm of Pennsylvania where Stephenson and Rich were given the leadership. Having set up numerical growth and personal profit as the goals toward which to work, these men had little patience with any of their subordinates who did not suit their methods to these ends. Under such conditions it was natural for the public activities of the Order to grow increasingly sensational and to take such forms as cross burnings, out-of-door initiations, parades and rioting.

The temporary success which accompanied the use of sensationalism blinded the higher officials to the evils which their methods encouraged. In the first place the emphasis on numerical growth by sensational demonstrations brought to the top and kept in office an undesirable type of leaders,—men who were willing to speak “from the teeth out,” who were more interested in profits than Protestantism and who were able, because of their lack of scruple, to turn in large numbers of recruits. Consequently the membership rolls of local Klans were overloaded with many undesirables who were a constant source of weakness to the Order. This combination of unscrupulous leaders and of uneducated, credulous, short-sighted Klansmen craving excitement was responsible for most of the excesses which in time blackened the reputa-



tion of the Klan in Pennsylvania just as earlier it had been blackened in the South. One need only mention the Homestead Wrecking Crew in which A. L. Cotton himself claimed honorary membership, the gang of ruffians who ran the Wesley Klan in Venango County, the hoodlums who threw cow manure over buildings in Manns Choice, the black-robed gang who served Paul M. Winter in Philadelphia and hauled off people to an old barn outside the city fitted up as a torture chamber, the group who proposed to castrate a Negro in Everett, the group who administered a horse-whipping in Mechanicsburg, the Harrisburg Wreckers, the Night-riders in Reading. These are just a few of the Klan groups within the state whose members believed in violence and practiced it.

It is easy, however, to generalize too hastily regarding the personnel of the Order in the state. Certainly intelligent leadership at the top was badly lacking from the start. As regards the rank and file Klansmen, it may be safely said that after the experience at Carnegie and Lilly and the consequent jail sentences, bills for litigation and "lodges of sorrow" for dead Klansmen, only a small fraction of the membership remained permanent advocates of violence. A survey of the Exalted Cyclops in several regions shows that with few exceptions they were ordinary tradesmen or small business men many of whom were without formal education beyond the elementary school. As a rule they were free from hypocrisy. They honestly believed that there was a definite foreign and Catholic menace. Hiram W. Evans himself freely admitted that the Klans "were mostly composed of poor people."<sup>18</sup> In 1927, seventy-three Pennsylvania Exalted Cyclops stated upon oath that the membership of the state was "gleaned from the average walk of life and such as composes our Protestant churches, our lodges, commercial clubs and other civic organizations." The membership rolls of the Klan are still closely guarded but from the few which have come into the hands of the writer, the conclusion can be drawn that, barring the intellectuals and the liberals, the white, native-born Protestant population was occupationally well represented. Unquestionably, however, the most credulous parts of this population found their way into

the Klan. The rolls of the local organizations should have considerable value to those who make it their business to traffic in fear and turn credulity into profit.

### References

1. D. C. Stephenson. From his deposition filed in the U. S. District Court at Pittsburgh (Post Office Building) as evidence in Case 1897 in Equity (1927) p. 10.
2. Deposition of W. J. Simmons filed in the U. S. District Court at Pittsburgh as evidence in the same case.
3. Related to the writer by A. L. Cotton in a personal interview.
4. The Scottdale Independent, August 31, 1923.
5. The fullest account of the Carnegie demonstration and riot is contained in the testimony presented at the Coroner's inquest subsequent to the murder of Thomas Abbott. John Conely, Burgess of Carnegie (Catholic) was indicted for inciting to Riot and the testimony given at his hearing before Justice Prosser is valuable. See also the testimony of the following, presented in Case 1897 in Equity (above): H. E. A. McNeel, vol. i/310 ff; W. A. McElvray, i/263 ff; Roy Barclay, i/134 ff; N. C. Hogue, ii/332 ff; H. C. Howard, ii/552 ff. For the incidents relative to the murder itself, see the transcript of testimony presented at the trial of Patrick McDermott, charged with the murder, Allegheny County Court of Oyer and Terminer, February—1924 term of Court, Case 155.
6. Testimony of Roy F. Barclay; transcript of testimony, Case 1897 in Equity (above), vol. 1, p. 136.
7. Related to the writer by Edward Miller, K. C., resident of Scottdale.
8. Related to the writer by J. A. Kelley, Secretary of the Scottdale Klavern.
9. Scottdale Independent, Sept. 4, 1923.
10. Case 1897 in Equity (above) Transcript of Testimony i/139.
11. Testimony of Joseph G. Flemmer, E. C. of Johnstown Klavern.
12. Ibid. ii/240.
13. Statement of John J. McGuckin, Chief of Police at Bristol. Van A. Barrickman Correspondence.
14. Transcript of Testimony (ibid) ii/364; Testimony of Mrs. Mamie Bittner.
15. Ibid. i/316; Testimony of H. E. A. McNeel.
16. Testimony of J. A. Kelley, Kligrapp of Scottdale Klan No. 37.
17. Case 1897 in Equity, U. S. District Court, Pittsburgh, Penna., Transcript of Testimony, Vol. 1, p. 320.
18. The Kourier Magazine, February, 1933, p. 2.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE ORGANIZATION OF THE KLAN

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*"The government of the order shall ever be military in character, especially in its executive management and control, and no legislative or constitutional amendment hereafter shall encroach upon, affect or change this fundamental principle of the Invisible Empire."—From Article 1, Section 2 of the Klan Constitution*

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There should have been little doubt in the minds of the "citizens" of the "Invisible Empire" about the general type of organization they had joined. It had a written constitution which was distributed widely. Drawn up and published under the regime of Col. Simmons,<sup>1</sup> it was largely written by him although the supreme legislative body of the Order was vested by the charter with the power to "adopt and amend Constitutions and By-laws," and a committee of that body did work over the instrument prior to its publication. This constitution set up a highly centralized "Empire" which was subdivided geographically into "Realms" or states and these in turn further divided into "Provinces" (groups of counties) and into local districts called "Klanton." This last division might include a township or small city or a few wards of a larger city. It represented roughly the area from which the local Klavern drew its members.

Each of these geographical areas had its own set of officers.\* The Klanton officers with minor exceptions were duplicated in the Province and were differentiated by the prefix "Great." Similarly the state officers were designated as "Grand" and the national officers as "Imperial."

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\*The Klanton officers were: the Exalted Cyclops, president; Klaliff, vice-president; Klokard, lecturer; Kludd, Chaplain; Kligrapp, secretary; Klabee, treasurer; Kladd, conductor; Klarogo, inner guard; Klexter, outer guard; Night-Hawk, in charge of candidates; and three Klokann, board of investigators, auditors and advisers.

Power was largely centralized in the national or "Imperial" organization. It has been noted that the geographical divisions of the Ku Klux Klan parallel somewhat the geographical divisions of the United States government. The similarity between the two governments ends there. The Federal Constitution of the U. S. sets up three distinct departments of government which were designed to balance and check each other. The Klan constitution provided for an overwhelmingly powerful executive department and, subordinate to it, relatively weak legislative and judicial bodies.

The legislative branch of the Klan government - called the Klonvokation was made up of all imperial officials together with the highest administrative officer and one elected delegate (Kleeper) from each realm and province, and all heads of local Klans who cared to attend. Regular biennial meetings were held.

The procedure of these meetings made it a comparatively simple matter for the Imperial Wizard to control them. The Imperial officials who presided over its meetings were appointed by the Wizard and all action taken was subject to his veto.<sup>2</sup> True, this veto could be overridden by a three-fourths vote of the Klonvokation but in practice this was almost impossible to obtain. Voting was proportional. Each realm was allowed one vote for each one hundred Klansmen or majority fraction thereof who were in good standing. Each Exalted Cyclops attending was allowed a personal vote and the remainder of the realm voting strength was divided equally among the other representatives present at the Klonvokation.<sup>3</sup> Since comparatively few Klans had less than a hundred members and many had from two to five hundred members, this voting provision obviously gave the bulk of the voting strength into the hands of realm and provincial officers whom the Wizard could control through his power of appointment. Under such conditions an Imperial Wizard would have to be weak indeed not to be able to control the twenty-five per cent of the votes of the Klonvokation necessary to prevent his veto being overridden.

Besides this veto power over legislation passed by the Klonvokation, the Imperial Wizard enjoyed in his own right the power to furnish all laws for the governing of realms not fully organized.<sup>4</sup> Even after the Realm Kloreros were established and



voted on their own legislation, none could become effective unless ratified by him. This was true also of the rules and by-laws formulated by each separate Klan. These, too, had to be submitted to the Imperial office and await its approval.<sup>5</sup>

In Kloranic and ritualistic matters the Constitution<sup>6</sup> delegated to the Emperor complete charge of "creating" as well as of "promulgating" the "Kloranic, ritualistic and philosophic work of the Order." This extensive legislative power included the right to "design or cause to be designed, all paraphernalia, regalia, uniforms, costumes, emblems, insignia, flags, banners, and jewelry for individual wear, honorary and official jewels, hoods, pamphlets and literature of the Order." When Col. Simmons withdrew from the Order giving up his title of Emperor, his office was combined with that of Imperial Wizard and this latter office made even more potent.

The judicial body set up by the Constitution was called the Klouncilium. Consisting of the Imperial Wizard and fifteen other officers called Genii and appointed by the Wizard, this body served as the court of appeal in all matters of a judicial nature. Its decisions were final but, according to the constitution, only "when same are ratified by the Imperial Wizard."<sup>7</sup> The Klouncilium not only had the above mentioned judicial function but was also the advisory council and executive staff of the national organization. Included in its membership was the Klaliff or vice-president of the Order, the Klazik or head of the Department of Realms, the Kligrapp or secretary, the Klabee or treasurer, the Klonsel or attorney, the Night Hawk or head of the Department of Investigation, the Klokard who was responsible for publicity and for disseminating the ideas which the national organization wished spread among the membership. It included, as well, seven other officers of lesser responsibilities. It was required to meet as a group in July of each year and could be called in special meeting by the Imperial Wizard or by five of its members. These formal meetings were not particularly essential for a majority of the members of the Klouncilium had their offices along with the Imperial Wizard in Atlanta. There was also a vague grant of legislative power given to the Klouncilium by Section three of the seventh Article of the Constitution which read: "It shall have full

power and authority . . . to act in the interim between sessions of the Imperial Klonvokation."

The most noticeable feature of the National organization was the centralization of power in the office of the Imperial Wizard. He was endowed with virtual dictatorship of the Order. In view of the Klan criticism of the monarchical organization of the Roman Catholic Church and the lip service which the Order gave to democratic government, one is surprised to find its own organization extremely monarchical both in principle and in practice. "The government of this Order shall ever be military in character," is plainly stated in the first Article of the Constitution and, as if to make this un-amendable, there follows the statement, "no legislative enactment or constitutional amendment hereafter shall encroach upon, affect or change this fundamental principle of the Invisible Empire."<sup>8</sup>

As commander-in-chief of the Order, the Imperial Wizard was given supreme supervision over all departments of the organization.<sup>9</sup> "He shall have full authority and power to appoint all Imperial officers and Grand Dragons<sup>10</sup> . . . to remove from office at any time any officer of this Order of any rank or station or capacity, or any employee whomsoever, on the ground of incompetency, *disloyalty*, neglect of duty or for unbecoming conduct."<sup>11</sup>

The "original jurisdiction" given to the Klonvokation<sup>12</sup> became a rather empty grant. The control exercised by the Imperial Wizard over that body was determining. In practice it could pass no legislation for the Order which was not acceptable to him. His appointees, members of his executive council, acted as its president, secretary, and committee chairmen.<sup>13</sup> The controlling vote was in the hands of delegates who were his appointees, directly or indirectly. He appointed and controlled the Kloncilium which was empowered to act in the interim between its biennial meetings. Moreover, all residual power was placed in his hands. "Whenever a question arises . . . not provided for in this constitution," the Imperial Wizard "shall have full power and authority to determine such questions and his decision, which he shall report to the Imperial Klonvokation, if requested, shall be final."<sup>14</sup>

The Klonsilium in its judicial capacity was similarly subservient to the Imperial Wizard whose ratification was necessary for a decision.<sup>15</sup> But while this council was powerless to act in the judicial capacity without the Wizard's approval, he in turn was not restricted by the necessity of securing its approval, or by effective constitutional checks of any kind.\*

He, alone, had the power to "specify the conditions on which charters shall be issued," to issue them, to suspend, or revoke them.<sup>16</sup> He alone was given the privilege to "specify the duties of all officers regardless of rank or station,"<sup>17</sup> to "construct, in the name of this Order, with other members for its extension, financing, management, operation and business interests" and "to fix the compensation therefor."<sup>18</sup> In short, "the Imperial authority of this Order shall ever center and be vested in him and shall not be divided."<sup>19</sup>

With this wide grant of power, it is evident that there was little constitutional hindrance to as autocratic a rule as the Wizard might wish. It is true that provision was made for his removal from office for a just cause.<sup>20</sup> The small chance of ever effecting such action is evident, however. A three-fourths vote of the members of the Klonsilium together with the approval of the Grand Dragons was necessary for his removal and all of these officers were his own appointees and could be immediately dismissed for "disloyalty."

Nor need the Wizard fear removal when his four-year term of office expired. In the quadrennial election for this office any Klansman in good standing "as determined by the records of the Imperial Palace"<sup>21</sup> was eligible for election. But the voting was carried on by the Grand Dragons (Wizard-appointed) who met in executive session with voting power proportional to the membership of their respective realms. Since these Grand Dragons were uninstructed by their own membership and voted without obligation to the Klansmen of their own Realms, it is difficult to see how any Imperial Wizard who wished re-election could not

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\*At the time of the litigation between Col. Simmons and H. W. Evans over the latter's seizure of control, the Superior Court of Fulton County, Georgia, decreed "that so far as the Constitution gives the Imperial Wizard the power to veto an act of the Imperial Klonsilium, the same is contrary to the charter." This meant that, if the Klonsilium in its executive capacity acted affirmatively on any matter, the Imperial Wizard was bound by its action. When it is remembered, however, that any member of the Klonsilium could be dismissed "at any time" by the Wizard, open defiance of his wishes merely meant the elimination of such a member rather than a change in the Wizard's policy.

obtain it. Indeed, H. W. Evans, in spite of much dissatisfaction within the Order, has been able to maintain himself in the office of Imperial Wizard to the present time (1936).

It naturally seemed strange to many outsiders how this self-termed one hundred per cent American Order, claiming to be the chief defender of the fundamental principles of democratic government, could tolerate such a frame of government. Pressed for an explanation, the statement was often made by Klansmen that the secrecy of the Order and the type of work which it undertook opened the way for abuses both within and without the Order. This necessitated highly centralized authority and military discipline to keep the more boisterous and radical of its members in hand. Moreover, the effectiveness of the Order, it was said, depended upon unity of action and absolute obedience to the governing officials. This too demanded a military rather than a parliamentary type of procedure. In spite of plausible explanations, however, the contradiction between principles and practice was a vulnerable point in the Klan's defenses and proved a serious weakness when internal criticism began to plague the Order. Indeed, the Order succeeded as long as it did only because its membership accepted the ideals and leadership of the higher officials and did not try to change or criticize them. The Order was not set up as a flexible institution to be molded and modified by its membership. It was organized to serve the purpose of those at the top and as soon as the rank and file disagreed with that leadership the only alternatives were to submit or get out.

The largest subdivisions of the Invisible Empire were called "Realms" and generally followed state lines. The Imperial Wizard was given the same close supervision and power over the realms as he exercised over the national organization. Realms could be organized only on declaration of the Wizard and all officials were named or approved and all laws and regulations furnished by him during the provisional period.

The Realms passed through two stages of organization, the provisional and the chartered stage. In the former, the chief officer carried the title of King Kleagle which, in Pennsylvania, was later changed to Imperial Representative. This officer had nothing but delegated authority and held office only at the pleasure of the Wizard. There was no provision for any self-government



within a Realm during the provisional stage. The Wizard appointed and supervised his realm leaders who acted with delegated authority only. Indeed, many of their subordinates were responsible primarily to the national organization at Atlanta instead of to the realm office and were paid from national headquarters.

In Pennsylvania these subordinates consisted chiefly of three groups of people. The most numerous were the Kleagles or recruiting agents. Their duties included the organization of local Klaverns and the collection of ten dollar donations (klectokens) from each initiate. The Realm office parceled out the territory among these Kleagles whose success depended chiefly upon the number of members they were able to secure for the Order. The second group consisted of lecturers who generally travelled about addressing large public gatherings with the purpose of stimulating an interest in the Klan and of aiding the Kleagles in their recruiting. A third group of officials became necessary as the organization progressed. These were the service men, investigators and trouble hunters who enjoyed the distinction of being called "G-men." They were employed by the King Kleagle to check upon the activities of the recruiting officers, to discover and remedy any instances of dissention in the various klaverns and to recommend the suspension, banishment or re-instatement of Klansmen where advisable. They represented in a special way the Realm office. They were supposed to be more familiar with the technicalities of the organization and the intricacies of the ritual than the Kleagles and were used to instruct and correct the Klaverns in matters of procedure and policies and to advise them concerning the political, educational and social methods and measures which had the approval of the Realm officers. Finally, as the military branch of the Order, the Klavaliers, and the Junior Order developed, officials were appointed to administer these groups.

When a Realm became "fully organized" the titular head was known as the Grand Dragon but otherwise the office was little effected. He remained an appointee of the Imperial Wizard and remained subject to his immediate dismissal. Provision was made in organized realms for a Klorero<sup>22</sup> or convention corresponding to the national Klonvokation, which was at least partially repre-

sentative. It consisted not only of Realm officers but also of the officers and five delegates from each Province of the Realm together with the Exalted Cyclops or executive heads of each local klan in the Realm. The Klorero must be called only partially representative because (1) the state officers were not freely elected but chosen only on nomination of the Wizard-appointed Grand Dragons, (2) the executive heads of the Provinces (Great Titans) were not elected but appointed by the Grand Dragon with the approval of the Imperial Klazik or officer in charge of Realms, and the other Provincial officials were all nominated by the Great Titans, and (3) the Exalted Cyclops of the local klans, while not nominated by the Provincial or state heads, had to be approved by them before they could assume office.<sup>23</sup> These features made it possible for the higher officials to so control the personnel of the Kloreros that little opposition to realm and imperial policies developed in these Realm conventions.

Among the powers of the Klorero was that of electing the nine "Hydras" which made up the Grand Dragon's executive council. These elected officers could not be installed, however, until they had received the approval of the Imperial Klazik (later of the Imperial Klaliff). The Kloreros were also authorized to pass laws for the Realm which were not inconsistent with the constitution of the Order. But here, too, the heavy hand of the central authorities could interfere. Absolute veto power over all legislation of the Kloreros was given to both the Grand Dragon and the Imperial Wizard.<sup>24</sup>

The full effect of this control from the top was not evident in Pennsylvania as long as the internal affairs of the Realm ran smoothly. There was, however, a growing minority group which from 1924 on was opposed to the Hiram Wesley Evans-Sam D. Rich control. This minority group found it almost impossible to get a hearing in the state Kloreros and they became more and more irritated. Working outside the Klorero, it finally convinced the national office that Rich should be withdrawn from Pennsylvania and, in February 1926, his resignation was announced. A temporary state head was appointed and the Imperial Wizard promised the leaders of the group opposed to Rich that he would nominate a Grand Dragon acceptable to the Realm. He promised to allow the next Klorero to vote on the matter. The Klorero

met at DuBois in August and the matter was brought up. The choice of the Imperial Wizard was one Herbert C. Shaw, formerly a Methodist Episcopal minister of Erie. He was looked upon by many as a tool of the Wizard and by others as too rabidly anti-Catholic. When the question of his ratification as Grand Dragon was put to a vote he was rejected. No new nominee was put forward. Instead, H. K. Ramsey, who represented the Wizard, brought considerable pressure to bear upon some of the delegates present and ordered another vote on the question of Shaw's acceptance or the alternative of continuing an appointee from Atlanta as Grand Dragon. Some of the delegates withdrew and Shaw's appointment was ratified. This is a clear instance of the way the Klorero could be and was controlled by the national organization if occasion seemed to demand it. It should be understood, of course, that the constitutional right of Mr. Shaw to the office of Grand Dragon was unquestionable. The Imperial Wizard had the right to appoint whom he wished. As he had chosen to allow a vote of ratification, he could also choose to withdraw that privilege.

With Mr. Shaw's installation as Grand Dragon, the chartered stage of the Realm of Pennsylvania may be said to have begun. Certain changes in the financial arrangements accompanied it\* which had the effect of putting the Realm on a self-sustaining basis and necessitating that its expenditures be kept within the limits of its own income.

The Provincial organization in Pennsylvania was, for considerable time, not highly developed. During the regime of Sam Rich and the two temporary appointees that filled his office between his resignation and the selection of Herbert C. Shaw, there were but two Provinces in the Realm. The territory east of the Susquehanna comprised Province I, the remainder Province II. The latter, although organized later than East Pennsylvania, had, at the peak of its organization, more members than had Province I, but in 1926 it had but 46 per cent of the total Realm membership 25 and subsequently declined more rapidly.

Normally each province had eight officers, the Great Titan who was appointed by the Grand Dragon of the Realm and seven others who were elected by a Klonverse (convention) to which

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\*See Page 74.

the Realm and Provincial officers, the Exalted Cyclops and four delegates from each Klan in good standing might come. The function of this regional organization was conceived by the authors of the Klan constitution as fraternal and social. Its purpose was to promote good fellowship and maintain the interest of Klansmen in their Order.<sup>26</sup>

The number of Provinces was increased during the H. C. Shaw administration, perhaps in the hope that such action would check the dwindling interest and the declining membership. Great Titans travelled around and made pep speeches. Visitations were planned during which a gavel was presented to the visited Klan with due ceremony. Regular meetings were rotated among the different locals within the Provinces like summer union services are rotated among the different churches of a community. Provincial news began to appear in the national organ of the Klan, the *Kourier Magazine*, instead of local Klavern news witnessing both to a smaller activity on the part of individual Klaverns and an increased regional activity. During the early part of the administration of Grand Dragon Stough, who replaced H. C. Shaw in 1933, there were some fifteen Provinces. This number has been increased to sixty-seven, so that each county in the State is also an actual or potential Klan Province. This move has at least substantially increased the number of Great Titans and has perhaps served to fill some empty seats at the Realm Kloreros. Moreover, since the Titans are appointees of the Grand Dragon, it has doubtless served to give the Dragon added control over these gatherings.

The Klanton—the smallest organized unit of the Order—also passed through two stages, provisional and chartered. During the first of these stages they were under the control of a Kleagle who often came unrequested into a community under orders to establish a local organization. In some instances, the Realm office sent Kleagles into communities as a result of petitions requesting that Klaverns be established. Sometimes a man in some outlying area who had joined a Klavern in his county seat or larger city thought it possible to secure enough persons in his immediate community to form a separate unit and, often with the added hope that he would be appointed a Kleagle, petitioned for one.



In whatever way the local Klavern was initiated, the officer in charge was always a Kleagle appointed by the Realm office with the approval of the Imperial Wizard from whom thus indirectly he received his credentials. When it appeared that factionalism was increasing and that there was a group opposed to his leadership, Imperial Wizard Evans took the precaution to have his Kleagles sign the following "Pledge of Loyalty" to him personally: <sup>27</sup>

"I, the undersigned, in order to be a regular appointed Kleagle of the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (Incorporated), do freely and voluntarily promise, pledge and fully guarantee a lofty respect, whole-hearted loyalty and unwavering devotion at all times and under any and all circumstances and conditions from this day and date forward to H. W. Evans as Imperial Wizard of the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (Inc.). I shall work in all respects in perfect harmony with him and under his authority and directions, in all his plans for the extension and government of the Society, and under his directions, with any and all of my officially superior officers duly appointed by him.

"I shall at any and all times be faithful and true in all things, and most especially in preventing and suppressing any factions, schisms or conspiracies against him or his plans and purposes or the peace and harmony of the Society which may arise or attempt to arise. I shall discourage and strenuously oppose any degree of disloyalty or disrespect on the part of myself or any Klansman anywhere and at any time or place, towards him as the supreme chief governing head of the Society named.

"This pledge, promise and guarantee I make is a condition precedent to my appointment stated above, and the continuity of my appointment as a Kleagle and it is fully agreed that any deviation by me from this pledge will instantly automatically cancel and completely void my appointment together with all its prerogatives, my membership in the Society, and I shall forfeit all remunerations which may then be due me.

"I make this solemn pledge on my Oath of Allegiance and on my integrity and honor as a man and as a Klansman, with serious purpose to keep same inviolate.

Robert  
Shelton

"Done in the city of ..... State of .....  
on this the ..... day of ..... A. D. 19..

Signed .....

Address .....

Witness .....

Address ....."

Within the limitations effected by this pledge the power to admit members was entirely in the Kleagle's hands. The finances of the provisional klan were also in the jurisdiction of the Kleagle. He collected the initial "donation," kept his commission and sent the balance to the Realm office which protected itself somewhat by obliging most Kleagles to furnish bond.

The commission system by which they were paid and the temporary character of their connection with the local klans naturally stimulated the Kleagles to place an over-emphasis upon the number rather than upon the quality of the members taken in. Especially was this true after the movement got under way and was carried along by its own momentum. Few applicants with donation in hand were turned away. If any objection was raised relative to the laxness of the Kleagle in maintaining high membership standards, the reply was often given that when the klan grew large enough it could petition for a charter and secure an opportunity then to weed out any undesirables who might have been admitted.

The Realm office in organized realms determined the number of petitioners necessary before a local klan could be chartered. This was not a fixed number but varied with the type and size of the community in which the klan was located. In order to stimulate recruiting—and donations—the Realm office would often delay the granting of a charter as long as possible demanding a larger membership as a prerequisite.\*

There were three important advantages which were secured by a local Klavern when it was chartered. The first was the right

\*Klans in many parts of the state suffered delays in receiving their charters. In the Lehigh valley, the Lehigh Valley Klan and several others tried to force the Realm office to charter them by withholding the monies due the office until the charters were delivered. John B. Davis who was sent from the state office to settle the matter, rounded up the leaders and although confessing, "I sympathized with them myself but I was working for the Realm," suspended them for their insistence upon being chartered. By July 14, 1926, there had been 204 charters granted in the state.

to determine who should be included within its membership. When the charter had been granted, a vote could be taken on each member then upon the roll, and three negative votes was enough to reject anyone.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, each new applicant had to have his name submitted in three separate meetings with an opportunity given for objections to his admission, and in addition undergo an investigation by a Klokann committee of three. If rejected, the applicant was barred, except by special dispensation of the Imperial Wizard, from renewing his application again for one year.

A second advantage of being chartered was the privilege it gave to the local klan to share in the selection of its own officials. The Kleagle was removed from authority and an Exalted Cyclops and twelve Terrors were elected by the member Klansmen. It is true these officials could not be installed until they had been approved by the Great Titan or Grand Dragon within whose jurisdiction they were located and until the financial obligations of the Klan to its Province and Realm were met. Yet, in spite of these restrictions, some measure of self-government was obtained.

The third advantage was financial. Prior to its chartering, no part of the "donation" fee of new members could be kept in the local treasury. The Kleagle got his share and the remainder was sent to the Realm office and distributed again there. After chartering the Kleagle, of course, was out of the picture and the Exalted Cyclops who took his place as chief administrative officer served without salary. Thus \$7.50\* of each subsequent "donation" was retained by the local organization and could be used to meet local expenses, the remainder going to the national office.

The judicial body of each local klan analogous to the Imperial Klonsilium in the national organization was called the Tribunal. It was set up only when occasion demanded and consisted of sixteen Klansmen chosen by lot from a group of twenty-four persons nominated by the Exalted Cyclops, Klaliff, Klokard and Kludd. Appeals from its decisions could be taken before the Grand Tribunal, a permanent board of twelve persons appointed

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\*The records of some klaverns show that only five dollars of each klectoken was retained by the local klan.

by the Grand Dragon from among the Hydras and Giants of the Realm.

Persons could be brought before these bodies if they were charged in writing with one of six classes of "major" criminal offenses and if the Klokann committee, after investigation, recommended trial. The offenses were: (1) treason against the United States, (2) violation of Klan oaths, (3) disrespect of virtuous womanhood, (4) violation of the laws of the Order, giving allegiance to a foreign person or institution, habitual drunkenness or profanity, (5) the pollution of Caucasian blood, and (6) repeated commission of a minor offense.<sup>30</sup> If the Klokann committee decided that the offense was a minor one such as occasional drunkenness or profanity, disobedience of the rules and orders of the Klan or refusal to respond to a summons of the Exalted Cyclops, the matter was referred to the Exalted Cyclops who handled the case personally without holding a trial. In case of trial for the major offenses, both the prosecutor and the defendant (or his counsel) could summon and present witnesses and argue the case before the Tribunal. No one could be present in any capacity, however, who was not a Klansman in good standing. Guilt or acquittal was determined by a three-fourths vote of the Tribunal.<sup>31</sup> If the defendant was voted guilty, the Tribunal assigned one of four penalties: (1) reprimand, (2) suspension, (3) banishment and (4) banishment forever with complete ostracism by all members of the Order.

It will be evident from the foregoing that the only way a Klansman could be constitutionally removed from the Order by a fellow Klansman was by the process of trial and conviction in his local Klan and, if an appeal was taken, in the Grand Tribunal of his Realm. If convicted in some jurisdiction other than his own, the Klansman had the right of appeal to the Imperial Klouncilium. There was, however, one exception to this procedure. The Imperial Wizard had the constitutional power "at his discretion to issue banishment order" against a Klansman for any offense other than those specifically listed above which was "inimical to the best interest of this Order."<sup>32</sup> There was the right of an appeal from this banishment to the Imperial Klouncilium if it was made within ninety days after the date of banishment. If one assumes that the Wizard himself had the



right to determine what was "inimical to the best interests" of the Order, a loose construction of "any other offense" would allow him wide powers of banishment. It will be remembered that the power of the Wizard to remove every official of the Order from his office was unrestricted as was his authority to suspend or revoke the charters of individual Klans. This right of banishment extended his power to include every member of organization. It was used freely to check internal opposition in Pennsylvania and was for that reason fiercely resented by many as an instrument of tyranny.\*

Within the Order itself were several subsidiary organizations. There was a group of Knights Kamellia, a second degree into which a considerable number of Klansmen were initiated. A higher Order was called Knights of the Great Forest but comparatively few qualified for it.\*\* The regalia which these more distinguished Knights could wear was finer than the white muslin worn by those still in the probationary order of citizenship but the donation required to secure it was correspondingly higher. In isolated instances the Knights Kamellia maintained a complete organization of its own and held more or less regular meetings but in most Klaverns no separate organization was maintained and the degrees meant little more than the experience of participating in its initiatory drama.

The military order of the Klan called the Pennsylvania State Klavaliers, did, however, maintain a separate organization. It had its own constitution, laws, oath, officials, uniforms, dues and fees. Organized in the summer and autumn of 1924, it offered Klansmen, in consideration of a donation of \$16.45, monthly dues of not less than twenty-five cents<sup>33</sup> and an oath of strict allegiance to Hiram W. Evans,<sup>34</sup> the privilege of wearing a white military uniform and black leather puttees,<sup>35</sup> of being police officers at all outside-of-Klavern meetings such as parades, naturalizations, demonstrations and funerals, and of obeying the orders of their superior officers.<sup>36</sup> The duties of the Klavaliers which

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\*See Page 188.

\*\*In February 1928, Imperial Wizard Evans gave orders that the mask should no longer be worn and that every Klansman should become a Knight of the Great Forest. This was a time when there was danger that the Order might be legally prosecuted for lawlessness both in Pennsylvania and in Alabama in which event the leaders wished to be prepared to abandon the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, while keeping the organization under the name of Knights of the Great Forest.

were specifically mentioned in their constitution included keeping order, responsibility for securing all necessary permits for parades, meetings and the like, and seeing that the robe of each Klansman was clean and that no concealed weapons were carried. The arrests of Klansmen at the Lilly and Bristol riots doubtless dictated the inclusion of this last provision,<sup>37</sup> an item that received much emphasis in the succeeding "General Orders."

The Grand Dragon was ex-officio Commander-in-Chief of the Klavaliers in his Realm. He appointed a staff of two, a General and a Major General, to command all the units in the state. Each unit might elect officers analogous to the Klavern officers although the constitution assigned no duties to them. The first "General Order" signed by the Commander-in-Chief \* instructed the Exalted Cyclops to *appoint* a Klavalier captain who in turn should select ten men for the unit and these eleven together were instructed to "select twenty per cent of the membership, 'men in high standing and of military age,' for their Klavalier unit."<sup>38</sup> Moreover, this centralization of authority was emphasized by the Constitution of the Klavaliers which clearly stated that "the Government of this Order shall be vested primarily in the Imperial Wizard, and the Grand Dragon, as Commander-in-Chief, who shall be supreme." The will of these men, it further stated, must be "unquestionably recognized and respected by each and every Klavalier."<sup>39</sup>

The most remarkable phase of this control from the top is authorized by Article VI of the Klavalier Constitution. After declaring every article bearing an emblem or an insignia of the Klavaliers to be the property of the Realm organization, there appears this provision: "All moneys of the Klavalier Organization in the possession of any officers or member thereof shall automatically become the actual moneys of the Staff Treasury of the Organization and same must be freely and promptly turned over on demand." A supplementary section makes this provision applicable also in case of "the disbandment of a Klavalier unit."<sup>40</sup> Quite evidently the properties and funds of a local Klavalier unit were at its own disposal only on the sufferance of the Realm

\*Otto G. Gilden signed this order unconstitutionally as Commander-in-Chief, which office was held by the Grand Dragon. Mr. Gilden's correspondence shows him quite unfamiliar with correct English usage. This is another instance proving that many of the leaders of the Order were selected from the common walks of life, rather than from the professional or upper classes.

Staff. It is clear, too, that if the Staff found itself financially in arrears, the way was constitutionally open for it to send out "accredited officers" to make collections.

Corresponding somewhat in terminology with the military branch of the Klan but not actually organized by it was the so-called "military line of communication." Much stress was placed upon its development by representatives from Imperial headquarters whose goal it was to perfect an organization capable of carrying notices and secret orders to every Klansman in the United States within forty-eight hours after their issuance at Atlanta.<sup>41</sup> Where this was actually set up each Exalted Cyclops divided up his Klanton into neighborhoods, usually on precinct, ward or township lines. The resident Klansman in each of these neighborhoods made up a neighborhood committee over which a chairman, called a corporal, had charge. In larger Klantons there were groups of committee corporals under the chairmanship of sergeants. Thus the Imperial Wizard's military line of communication spread fan-shaped from his office to the Grand Dragons and from them in turn to the Great Titans, the Exalted Cyclops, the sergeants, the neighborhood corporals until every Klansman was reached. It was the boast of the national headquarters in 1924 that already there were several Realms in which the military communications system was perfected to forty-eight hour efficiency. Pennsylvania, however, was not listed among these nor did this system receive attention in many parts of the state.

In addition to the transfer of instructions from national headquarters to the individual Klansmen, it was also the purpose of the military communications organization to gather and send information in the opposite direction. Each community committee was under instructions to survey its area, know every man within it, especially those who were bootleggers or engaged in other illegal practices, know the attitudes of each on the leading questions of the day and all other information pertinent to the life of the neighborhood. The higher officials, by getting this information would, it was thought, be better able to direct the activities of the Order and form its policies. The neighborhood committees served also as fact gathering bodies for the Civic, the Public

Schools, the Governmental and the Law Support committees of their local klans.

In directing the flow of information from the bottom of the Order topward this communications set-up proved less efficient than in relaying orders from the top downward. Very few klans had trained investigators among their membership and the snoopers who tried to mimic secret service agents in most cases became mere gossip mongers. When an Exalted Cyclops wished to make an investigation for himself or check on reports from these neighborhood committees, he generally used a special "Intelligence Committee"—a few trusted men who acted secretly as his personal agents.

There was no part of the Organization in which the officials from Atlanta and from the Realm office took more interest than in the finances. After Colonel Simmons had placed E. Y. Clarke in charge of promotional activities the revenues had increased to an amazing degree and became a tempting prize. Indeed, as we have seen, the first major struggle within the Order was an effort to break the control of Simmons and Clarke over this income. This had been done. Clarke was driven out and Simmons was pensioned for a short time on a monthly salary and finally withdrew altogether from the organization, leaving H. W. Evans and his henchmen to distribute the "gravy."

The national, the Realm, and the local divisions of the Order shared the income. The national office received money from four principal sources. The first was a percentage of the ten dollar "donations" which "aliens" made at the time they applied for citizenship. For some time half of each donation was forwarded to the imperial treasury. This amount was subsequently reduced to four dollars, somewhat later to \$3.75 and, toward the end of 1924, to \$2.50. In addition to this, the national office received a profit from the sale of robes which cost the Order less than \$2.00 each to produce and which were sold to Klansmen for \$5.00 each. At first no Klansman was obligated to secure a robe but a good proportion of them did so. Later the price in Pennsylvania was raised to \$6.50. No reason was given for this increase nor was the quality of the garments supplied improved. Some Klansmen conjectured that the increase was due to the fact that the national organization had just acquired a new robe



factory and was rapidly paying for it. Others thought that the price had been raised by the Realm officials as a means of adding to their income. As a result of this increase, however, the number of robes purchased by initiates decreased. This led to the adoption of a new policy which guaranteed an income from this source for the future. The price was again reduced to five dollars but it was added to the "donation"—now raised to \$15.00—which every new member was required to make.

A third source of income was the imperial tax which the national organization collected from all chartered klans. It amounted to \$1.80 per year per member. For Pennsylvania, the imperial tax turned over to national headquarters from the time the first klan was chartered to October 1, 1925, totaled \$94,653.90.<sup>42</sup> This represented a period of about fifteen months since most of the klans involved had received their charters after July 1, 1924. Although later records are not now available it is safe to say that the imperial tax from Pennsylvania did not decline for at least another year. After 1926 the total membership of the Order declined so rapidly within the state\* that, in spite of the continued chartering of local klans, there must have been a substantial drop in the revenue collected on a per capita basis.

A fourth source of revenue which the national organization enjoyed was the income from its investments. It is impossible even to estimate this. The Klan did not own much tangible property. Indeed, of the real estate which Colonel Simmons had acquired, on a part of which he had hoped to erect a great Klan university, little was kept except the enlarged dwelling called the "Imperial Palace" and the Brown office building, both in Atlanta. The fact that real property was more easily assessable for damages at law was doubtless one of the determining factors in the investment policy of the national officials.

Turning from the imperial revenues to those of the Realm, the sources were practically the same. The Realm received a part of the initial "donations," which sum was increased by the income from petitions for higher degrees in the Order. There was a Realm tax collected from Klansmen in chartered klans

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\*See Page 162.

and at times the national office cut back to the Realm office fifty percent of the imperial tax.

Of each ten dollar donation, the amount retained by the Realm was first fixed by imperial decree at one dollar. When money began pouring into Atlanta, the imperial office grew more generous toward the Realm and increased the amount allowed the latter to two dollars. Later, in 1924, this amount was further increased to \$2.25. The Realm also received a commission of fifty cents on each robe ordered by Pennsylvania Klansmen.

The Realm tax, levied upon all members of chartered klans, was voted by the state Klorero. A minimum below which this tax could not be reduced, namely, eight and one-third cents per month, was fixed by the Constitution of the Order.<sup>43</sup> From the viewpoint of the Realm officials this constitutional provision was very wise for the Kloreros never voted more than this minimum. By 1925 this tax had become the largest single source of revenue for the Realm. This tax and the cut back of imperial tax accounted for more than ninety percent of its reported receipts.<sup>44</sup> A financial statement<sup>45</sup> covering a five months period in 1926 showed another source of income which was growing in importance, namely, the revenue from petitions for the degree of K-Duo or Knights Kamellia. During the period reported, it exceeded the income from robes and helmets by eighty percent.

Since no official membership records prior to 1926 are now available, it is impossible to calculate the probable income of the Realm with assurance or check the accuracy of the few financial statements which were released by the Realm authorities. The audit for the fiscal year of October 1924 to October 1925 showed a total income of only \$44,516.47. This is undoubtedly an understatement. Certainly "the naturalization of aliens" had by no means ceased during this period but no mention is made in this report of the income from donations. The income from robes was set down as \$1,502.00. If the Realm received fifty cents commission per robe, such a sum would represent 3,004 members purchasing robes. If any of these were new members, as most of them doubtless were, an income from the donations which they paid should have appeared in the audit.

The way in which this money was spent by the Realm office was shown by the audit to be as follows:

*DISBURSEMENTS*

Oct. 1924 to Oct. 1925

Salaries .....	\$19,438.13
Salary Expense .....	2,802.39
Office Expense .....	5,201.76
K-Duo Salaries .....	3,220.00
K-Duo Expense .....	2,164.17
Speaking .....	2,182.44
Legal .....	1,323.30
Washington Parade .....	368.75
Harrisburg Parade .....	502.00
Conneaut Deficit .....	1,483.40
Investigations .....	965.28
General Expense .....	439.85
Refunds .....	333.79
<hr/>	
TOTAL .....	\$40,425.26

The local organizations, unlike that of the Realm, received no financial aid from the higher administrative divisions of the Klan. They were obliged to levy their own dues which varied from six to ten dollars annually per member, and to pass the hat when funds were low or special activities were undertaken. Many klans experienced considerable difficulty in collecting dues and taxes which were payable quarterly in advance. The only members exempt from this taxation were ministers and a few individuals who had been members of the Klan of Reconstruction days. For a member to be in arrears for one quarter automatically suspended him and took away his privilege of attending any Klan meetings. To be re-instated such a member must pay up all his back taxes. The national headquarters were especially urgent that this rule be kept and compelled each klan to turn in an elaborate quarterly report.

In the larger klans sufficient dues had to be collected to pay for the rental of a hall, the maintenance of the equipment necessary for the performance of the ritual, the secretary's salary and supplies, the traveling expenses of the Exalted Cyclops or other representatives to the frequent Realm and Provincial meetings, the construction of crosses, the purchase of dynamite and the many other expenses incidental to their activities. Nevertheless, the local dues assessed upon members were usually the smallest item

of expense for the Klansman who travelled for miles to attend numerous demonstrations and parades, who gave his money for riot victims and lawyers' fees, for the children's home and for local charities, who purchased subscriptions to *The Kourier Magazine* and *The Fellowship Forum* and bought klan jewelry or stock in some klan sponsored business venture.

Local klans were often hard pressed to find supplementary ways to increase their own available funds. One of these was to charge admission to the grounds when out-of-doors demonstrations or initiations were held. A twenty-five cent or fifty cent fee multiplied a thousand or more times was helpful even if some of it did remain in the pockets of the guards and gatekeepers. It was likewise discovered that pin money could be made for the organization by the sale of refreshments, or more easily, by the sale of concessions for hot dog and ice cream stands, and booths for the sale of little American flags and patriotic emblems. Of course, if the weather proved inclement and the crowd disappointing, an anticipated profit was sometimes turned into considerable loss.

In Philadelphia, excursions on the river were often profitable. This was true especially when the members of the Women's Organization were asked to participate. Here also, the Yellow Dog degree was conferred, as it was in other places, sometimes as a scheme to bring profit to some Klan leader willing to capitalize the curiosity of the unsuspecting, sometimes to bring needed funds into the treasury of the Klavern. The initiation required for this degree included a good deal of vulgarity which most of the initiates enjoyed but which proved distasteful to a few who, having been asked to share the fun, paid their fifty cents or dollar and became unwilling actors in rather low comedy.

Some estimate of the amount of money which was taken out of the communities where klans existed can be made from the following letter:



Scottdale, Pennsylvania  
May-2-1928

Mr. Van A. Barrickman,  
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Dear Sir,

Enclosed find report of money sent to the State and National offices of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan by Scottdale Klan No. 37. I can be qualified to this amount as I have receipts and papers to show for same. There is more but I can not get it as J. A. Kelley our former Kligrapp has the records and has gone along with Shaw and Evans.

379 members when charter was received  
4 of these ministers (no charge)

375 members @ \$10.00 Klectoken .....	\$3,750.00
119 members @ \$5.00 (other \$5.00 retained by No. 37) .....	595.00
Paid for robes .....	1,480.00
Imperial Taxes for May and June 1924 ....	106.50
Imperial Taxes for July 1924 to July 1925 .....	875.45
State Taxes January 1925 to July 1925 ...	204.43
Imperial Taxes from July 1925 to July 1926 ..	618.90
State Taxes from July 1925 to July 1926 ..	339.66
Imperial Taxes from July 1926 to July 1927 ..	467.45
State Taxes from July 1926 to July 1927 ..	256.92
Lilly Fund .....	186.50
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$8,880.81</b>

There is more of the Lilly Fund, Abbott Fund, Pittsburgh Dispatch and others of which I cannot get the records.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) *James A. Miller*, Acting E. C.  
Scottdale Klan No. 37

Attest:—

(Signed) *Ira B. Ritenour*, Kligrapp,  
Scottdale Klan No. 37

This brief account of the organization of the Klan reveals a highly centralized, far from democratic Order to whose little known higher officials Pennsylvania Klansmen gave liberally of personal loyalty and of financial support. Prior to 1930 the money paid by Pennsylvania Klansmen in fees and taxes to support their local, state and national organizations was at least

\$5,000,000.00 and certainly their activities involved additional indirect expenditures of considerably more than that sum. Perhaps the enjoyment, the excitement, the general psychological benefit derived by members was worth the money. Totalling up the objective results in community betterment and balancing them against the financial expenditures made by the Klansmen, one is inclined to say that the cost was high.

### References

1. The copyright date of the first Klan Constitution is 1921 although it was not legally ratified by the Klonsvocation until November, 1922. Minutes of the Imperial Klonscilium, meeting of May 1 and 2, 1923, p. 13.
2. Article 6, Section 3.
3. Article 6, Section 2.
4. Article 16, Section 2.
5. Article 18, Section 10.
6. Article 5.
7. Article 7, Sections 2, 6.
8. Article 1, Section 2.
9. Article 10, Section 5.
10. Article 10, Section 10.
11. Article 10, Section 9.
12. Article 6, Section 1.
13. Article 6, Section 3.
14. Article 10, Section 3.
15. Article 10, Section 6.
16. Article 10, Section 3.
17. Article 10, Section 2.
18. Article 10, Section 12.
19. Article 10, Section 1.
20. Article 9, Section 2.
21. Article 9, Section 1.
22. Article 16, Section 2.
23. Article 18, Section 17.
24. Article 16, Section 2.
25. Estimate of H. K. Ramsey, Imperial Kligrapp.
26. Article 17, Section 6.
27. From printed copy of the "Kleagle's Pledge of Loyalty" submitted by Harry A. McNeel, who as a Kleagle was required to execute it, and who testified to its authenticity.
28. Article 18, Section 3.
29. Klansman Lackland of the Imperial Klazik's office as reported in the mimeographed minutes of the State Klorero, Dec. 6, 1924, p. 6.
30. Article 20, Section 2.
31. Article 20, Section 18.
32. Article 20, Section 34.
33. Constitution and Laws of the Klavaliers of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of the State of Pennsylvania. Article 3, Section 2.
34. Enlistment Paper, Pennsylvania Klavaliers (official).
35. Klavalier Constitution, Article 1, Section 5.
36. Ibid. Article 6, Section 3, Supplement B.
37. Ibid. Article 2.
38. General Order No. 1, October 31, 1924.
39. Klavalier Constitution, Article 1, Section 3.
40. Ibid. Article 6, Sections 2, 3 and supplement, paragraph a.
41. For example, see the address of Klansman O. H. Curry, Minutes of the State Klorero, Dec. 6, 1924, pp. 9-10 (mimeographed).
42. Testimony of Joseph Shoemaker who was the Realm administrator of the Chartered Klans. Transcript of Testimony, Case No. 1897 in Equity, Dist. Ct. of the U. S. for Western Pennsylvania, vol. 1, p. 99.
43. Constitution of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Article 15, Section 3.
44. Financial statement of the Realm, covering the period October 1, 1924 to September 30, 1925. Signed by Robert Wickline, auditor, and Sam D. Rich, Imperial Representative.
45. Signed by H. K. Ramsey, Trustee, and covering a period from February 16 to June 30, 1926.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE KLAN AND KLANSMEN: FRATERNALISM

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*"I swear that I will be faithful in defending and protecting the home, reputation and physical and business interests of a Klansman and that of a Klansman's family. I swear that I will at any time without hesitating go to the assistance or rescue of a Klansman in all things honorable." From Section IV of the Oath of Allegiance.*

*"We appreciate the intrinsic value of a real practical fraternal relationship among men of kindred thought, purpose and ideals and the infinite benefits accruable therefrom, and we shall faithfully devote ourselves to the practice of an honorable Clanishness that the life and living of each may be a constant blessing to others."* —From the Ku Klux Klan Creed.

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Fraternalism was a principle which was emphasized again and again in the literature of the Order. While many members of other fraternal societies enlarged their social contacts by joining the Klan, it is more significant that considerable numbers of men found in the Klan their one fraternal home. It was their lodge and their service club. They attended its meetings, exchanged with other Klansmen the mystical SOG, and discussed the status of the nation and the morals of their community. It enabled them, when visiting some other town, to give the secret sign and when recognized, enter into fraternal conversation with persons who ceased to be strangers because, like themselves, they held citizenship in the Invisible Empire. It enhanced their sense of power. Dignified both by numbers and by what were felt to be defensible aims and high ideals, furnished by its founder with a high-sounding ritual and suitable regalia, and equipped with secret countersigns, handclasps and pass-words, the Klan became a common man's club. That it brought relief from the dull monotony of routine existence for the residents of many a spiritless community cannot be successfully controverted.

A substantial expression was given to the fraternal spirit by the social and recreational activities of the Order. The regular meetings were not without recreational value. There was dramatic activity in donning their robes and participating in the opening ritual. There was purpose in creating a commendable degree-team and pride in listening to it and having it called to perform initiatory rites in other Klaverns. There was the exhilarating by-play that characterizes a group of men in their moments of relaxation.

Moreover, basket picnics, spelling bees, debates, boat trips and various social gatherings to many of which the Women of the Ku Klux Klan were cordially invited served as a welcome diversion and consequently were frequently planned. Klaverns in the "Pennsylvania Dutch" sections of the state reported numerous enjoyable sauerkraut dinners and goat roasts which became occasions not only for speeches from Provincial and Realm officers but also for sleight of hand performances and for the best joke tellers of the Klaverns to tell their tales. The frequent "demonstrations" were simply glorified picnics with visitors galore, speakers, stunts, parades and refreshments.

The summer months were filled with these.<sup>1</sup> The records for 1927 are most complete in this regard and while the Klan was by no means as strong then as earlier nor its demonstrations as numerous, there were held on July 23d six such affairs.\* On August 6th three were held concurrently at Lewistown, at Middeltown, and at Reading. On August 20th five others were held.\*\* Some of the demonstrations lasted for three consecutive days and Klansmen from neighboring Klaverns usually turned out en mass to help celebrate.

The Realm office gave these picnics publicly in the circular letters which were periodically sent to local Klaverns. Exalted Cyclops were expected to urge Klansmen to attend. The larger and the more enthusiastic the gathering, the more it would build morale, the bigger would be the profits from refreshment booths or from the sale of concessions and the more successful it would be from the standpoint of publicity.

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\*Held at Penbrook, Indiana, Portage, Hustontown, Lykens and Pitcairn.

\* \*At Benezett, Irwin, Wyalusing, Kingston and Red Lion.



Waynesboro Klan advertised one such occasion as a three day "field meet" with a "great regalia parade," a "mammoth fireworks display and sports of all kinds." Admission was 25 cents. On September 3, 1927 the Carnegie Klan charged 50 cents admission to a great demonstration with "fireworks, band concerts, singing and sports." The following is a typical program of one of the less elaborate affairs:<sup>3</sup>

- 2 P. M.
  - Song: America
  - Prayer
  - Flag Raising
  - Star Spangled Banner
  - Address: George Strayer, Dayton, Ohio
  - Solo: P. S. Wight
  - Address: A. B. Taylor, Greensburg, Pa.
- 4 P. M. Band Concert
- 5 P. M. Aeroplane
  - Klavalier Drills
- 7 P. M. Parade
- 8:30 P. M. Aeroplane
  - Address: Rev. J. F. Strayer, Latrobe, Pa.
  - Male Quartet
  - Address: Rev. Toba, Dallas, Texas
  - Male Quartet
- 9:30 Naturalization
- 10:30 Fireworks

While the fraternal relationship which developed among Klansmen as a result of this recreational activity was valuable, it involved no appreciable sacrifice by Klansmen for each other. Did fraternalism reach deeper and find expression in charitable activity? The evidence points to an affirmative answer. Indeed, if proof is needed that idealism and desire for service were important elements in the early history of the movement, one need only review the generosity of the local Klaverns in their charities. In the first place, they gave generously to their Order with no strings attached. There were no questions asked at first about the use to which either their original ten dollar donation or their quarterly national and realm taxes were put. For at least four years, i. e. from 1921 to 1925, there did not develop sufficient demand for the accounting of Realm funds to cause the Realm office to issue a regular statement of receipts and expenditures.

That these monies were chiefly used for the expenses of propagation and not for charities in spite of the emphasis which the Order put on "klanishness" was generally understood by the members. But no objection was made.

Local Klaverns were, therefore, chiefly responsible for all donations which were made to needy Klansmen and for other benevolences. While the amount of contributions for charitable purposes was no doubt large, especially during the early period of enthusiasm, there was little done in an organized or planned way. There was not a single instance reported to the writer, with the exception of the Klan Haven project, where an organized budget covering definitely predicted needs was drawn up. On the contrary, the giving was haphazard and generally made to meet immediate requirements. As a consequence it was largely fortuitous whether adequate provision was made or not. It depended upon the closeness to payday, upon whether or not other collections had recently been taken, upon the effectiveness of the appeal, the popularity of the beneficiary and many other circumstances. Exalted Cyclops, who have reviewed this phase of the activity of their Klaverns with the writer, have been frank to admit that there was little fairness in the way charities had been distributed. Often the relatively less needy person would receive more than the individual whose need was great. Klansmen usually gave without knowing what others of their number were contributing.

Naturally, the Order tried first to help its own members who were considered as possessing a first lien upon the benevolence of their fellow Klansmen. A regular item on the agenda of each business session of a local Klonclave was the question asked by the Exalted Cyclops: "Does any Klansman know of a Klansman or a Klansman's family who is in need of financial or fraternal assistance?"<sup>2</sup> Klan charities did not, however, end with aid given to Klansmen. Baskets at Thanksgiving time were distributed to the needy of the community by many local Klaverns. Another type of benevolence is illustrated by the Scottdale Klan which paid the hospital expenses of a child who had been crippled from infancy. There were instances not a few of Klaverns which paid back rent of deserving individuals to prevent eviction and which met the interest on mortgages to prevent foreclosure.

It is impossible to estimate quantitatively the amount of this charity for in many instances no record of collections and hat-passings was kept. Some Kligrapps (Secretaries) justified this un-business-like procedure on the ground that it was desirable to keep donations as secret as possible. If no record was kept, there would be less possibility that at some future time the recipient of the gifts would be reminded that he had been an object of charity. Often the collection was simply turned over to a committee with no announcement of the amount collected or accounting from the committee except the report that the collection had been "delivered to the beneficiary as directed."

The obvious looseness of these methods and the abuses which grew out of them led to a recommendation by the State office that regular standing committees be appointed and that the whole matter of charities be put on a sounder basis. Most of the Klaverns followed the advice and three committees were named which dealt respectively with welfare, sickness, and funerals or "lodges of sorrow." The Welfare Committee undoubtedly had the most responsibility and its members were appointed by the E. C. presumably "after consultation with the Kludd (chaplain)." To it were assigned the following duties:

(a) To administer all charity funds of the Klan, including the tithe of net local dues that should be set aside for charity and all freewill offerings for that purpose.

(b) To investigate all cases of need reported, determine their worthiness and dispense funds as the case may demand and the money available may permit.

(c) In case other assistance than funds is needed to report the circumstances to the Klan, requesting such aid from fellow Klansmen.

(d) To assist Klansmen in need of advice or other aid during any misfortune.

(e) To report in writing at every meeting. The financial items in this report shall become a part of the minutes.<sup>4</sup>

The dissatisfaction arising among Klansmen because of too frequent appeals for free-will offerings at the Klavern meetings was noted and included with the above recommendations was the advice that "no such appeal is to be permitted until it has been approved by the Welfare Committee."

The Sick Committee had the usual duties of visitation and responsibility for all floral offerings. If they found circumstances that called for charity, they were instructed to report that fact to the Welfare Committee and turn the matter over to it.

Upon the Committee of Funerals and Lodges of Sorrow was placed "responsibility for sympathetic kindness to a bereaved family, for proper honor to the memory of a departed brother, and for conducting the Funerals and Lodges of Sorrow in such a manner as to impress upon all the beauty and dignity of Klan-craft."<sup>6</sup> It, too, could not administer charity but had to summon the Welfare Committee in case of this need.

Unquestionably this centralization of alms-giving into the hands of a single committee which was obliged to investigate requests and "report in writing" to the Klavern was a needed reform. It was proof that the Order had passed from its first crusading phase into its second commercialized phase. The ugly charge of misappropriation or misuse of funds had been made and too often now the leaders considered their positions not as posts of honor which permitted them to render gratuitous service but as jobs in which there was the possibility of profit.

Klan charities, as far as the writer could determine, were made to persons rather than institutions. Unlike the Service Clubs, Rotary and Kiwanis, local Klans rarely gave to organizations, not even to Boy Scouts, Red Cross, Community Chests, City Charity boards, or temperance societies. Even when donations were made to the Protestant churches, as was frequently the case, the gift was always presented to a person, usually the pastor. It is obvious from a study of the donations which they made, that Klansmen generally were unwilling to give unless the person who received the gifts knew whence his aid came. To give to another institution like the Red Cross, they felt, would only be adding to the prestige of that organization since it would control the distribution of the bounty. The Klan was not interested in any second handed charity. If the boys and girls should be helped, the Klan felt it better to establish its own Junior Order than to contribute to the Scouts. If charity was needed, the Klan believed it should make its own distribution rather than work through or cooperate with the Organized Charity boards or Community Chests. If Klansmen in their own giving tried to follow the biblical injunc-



tion not to let their left hand know what their right hand had given, it is far more evident that they tried to make sure that the individual recipients and the public in general knew who their benefactor was so that due acknowledgment could be given.

There were two special funds which the Pennsylvania Klan raised in behalf of its own people which are significant in an evaluation of the charitable activities of the Order. They were designated as the Abbott fund and the Lilly fund. As previously mentioned (*ante* p. 52), a riot occurred in the fall of 1923 at Carnegie when an attempt was made to prevent a parade of Klansmen. In the confusion incident to that affair Thomas Abbott had been shot and subsequently died, leaving a widow and one small child with no funds to provide for them. Clearly this was a case when Klansmen were obligated to come to the assistance of a Klansman's family. A collection was taken on the night of the murder, the exact amount of which was not reported. Since the Imperial Wizard was present, the money was turned over to his office and was later increased by special offerings. Mrs. Abbott did not live long after her husband's death and received scant attention from Atlanta. One, Minnie Behling, of McDonald, Pa., was given custody of the child, Thomas Abbott, Jr., and, according to her testimony, received for a time \$30.00 a month from the National treasurer. But Pennsylvania Klansmen were never given an accurate accounting of this fund and never knew how much of the money reached the family for whom it was given.

Another riot at Lilly, Pa., had resulted in several deaths, in much litigation and a great deal of hardship for the families of the Klansmen who served jail sentences as a consequence. Another fund was set up, this time by the State office and a committee, with H. C. Woods as chairman, was made responsible for it. Numerous appeals to local Klansmen over the state brought in, by November, 1924, some \$34,156.<sup>6</sup> The greatest single disbursement reported was for litigation. The attorneys received \$18,355, more than twice as much as was spent for relief of Klansmen and their families (\$8,999.46). For printing and special stenographers the outlay was \$3,023.86 while court costs and witness fees and costs of investigation totaled nearly \$3,000. Sufficient irregularities in this matter had occurred to cause considerable

editing of the minutes of the Klorero before they could safely be circulated to the different Klaverns, so the matter is not altogether clear. Quite evidently, however, the fund was not primarily a charity to aid distressed Klansmen. The fund was raised largely by an appeal for charity but, as the above figures show, was used by the State organization to pay for expensive litigation in an attempt to clear the name of the Order.\*

The most commendable charitable undertaking for which the Order was responsible was the Klan Haven project—a home for needy and homeless children. Initiated by the women of the Ku Klux Klan, it was supported by both the men's and women's organizations and eventually was placed under joint control. Speakers were hired to make appeals and to gather money. A regular annual Klavern meeting was set apart by the men's organization—the meeting immediately preceding Thanksgiving—as Klan Haven meeting and contributions taken to meet current expenses. Various special methods were used such as the raising of a mile of pennies with various Klaverns competing for the honor of raising the largest portion of the mile. A regular Klan Haven visitation day was established in midsummer when caravans from various parts of the state met in Harrisburg, on the grounds of the Home. A special program of speakers, of Klavalier drills, of games and entertainment added attraction and helped to publicize the Home. The original stone dwelling was destroyed by fire but money was raised to rebuild it. At the peak of its activities, forty-one children, chiefly of Klansmen, were housed and provided for at Klan Haven. Some of the children had been committed by court order and the State helped with the maintenance expenses in these instances. Indeed steps were taken to secure court orders in as many cases as possible and Mr. Pinchot's administration was interested in the home and cooperated to this end.

In the minds of many Klansmen the obligation of fraternal assistance was interpreted to include commercial patronage of business enterprises operated by fellow citizens of the Order. Undoubtedly the class loyalty engendered by the Klan led to

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\*Some money was withdrawn from the Lilly fund to pay the hospital expenses of certain Pennsylvania Klansmen who had been wounded in the riot at Niles, Ohio. A special collection amounting to \$106.00 was taken in the Klorero for the family of L. P. Bailes, Greenville, Pa., who had died as a result of this same riot.

considerable discrimination against Jewish, Catholic and foreign born business men. This benefited the Protestant, Gentile, nativist group but only where the mass of people were in the latter classification. Retaliatory discrimination by the non-nativist group was often used with effect where that group was numerous, as the Klansmen in Latrobe and Patton—to mention but two instances—found to their sorrow.<sup>7</sup>

But the question remained: Should Klansmen buy of Klansmen rather than of other native born Protestants? Fear that such a result would actually obtain led not a few business men to join the Order for security. Jewelers, for instance, who wished to sell insignia to Klansmen took pains to join so that they could push their sales as brothers. Other Klansmen with their own business interests at heart wanted to use the Klavern rolls as mailing lists and exploit the value that lay in fraternal appeal. Other Klansmen dreamed of companies which would have a monopoly on the sale of certain articles to Klansmen. The Gates City robe factory enjoyed such a monopoly and made enormous profit. The American Printing and Manufacturing Company at Atlanta was similarly managed by insiders. In Pennsylvania a group of Klan business men in and around Pittsburgh conceived the possibilities of putting on the market a specially wrapped candy with the Klan insignia prominently stamped on it. It was felt that Klan loyalty would build a regular market outside the practically guaranteed sales at the Klan demonstrations and picnics and make a handsome profit for the promoters. Some \$5,000 worth of stock was sold for the proposed scheme when the declining fortunes of the Order in Western Pennsylvania turned hopes of income into actual loss for the investors.

In this same connection it is interesting to know that another economic possibility of fraternalism did not go unnoticed. A project was initiated by "Judge" James A. Comer, an Imperial officer, to organize a National Service Club within the Ku Klux Klan. The Club might be joined by any Klansman who for an annual service charge—reputed to have been set at \$36—would receive national advertising and national cooperation for mutual business interests throughout all the Klaverns of the Nation.<sup>8</sup> Agents of the Club were appointed in Pennsylvania<sup>9</sup> and sup-

plies and information were distributed when unknown but easily surmisable circumstances caused the abandonment of the project.

Similarly motivated was the Empire Mutual Life Insurance Company which was chartered under the laws of Missouri and acquired by certain Klansmen who saw in the venture a hope of profit. Members of other lodges such as the Maccabees and the Odd Fellows supported the insurance departments of their Orders and the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan might be expected to do no less. Moreover, as far as fraternal insurance was concerned, Klansmen represented a virtually unworked clientele with great faith in anything labeled with the Klan name or symbolism and a lively zeal to promote the Order.

This Klan subsidiary began its activities in 1924, duly heralded in the columns of the *Kourier Magazine*:

“Some facts regarding the Empire Mutual Life Insurance Company of Kansas City, Missouri:

- No. 1. This company is an Old Line Legal Reserve Mutual Stock Company.
- No. 2. All of its stock is owned by, and is being held in trust for, the National Headquarters of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc.
- No. 3. This company was unanimously approved by the Second Imperial Klonsvocation held in Kansas City, Missouri, September 23 to 26, inc., 1924.
- No. 4. This company writes none but native born, White, Gentile, American citizens.”

While some millions of insurance was written by this Company, its activities were largely confined to the states of Missouri, Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas.<sup>10</sup> There was little solicitation made in Pennsylvania until 1927. In that year the Imperial Wizard circularized the Klans in its behalf urging the members to purchase their protection in a white, Gentile, Protestant Corporation. By that date, however, the Klansmen of Pennsylvania, remembering the failure of Daily Dispatch Publishing Company, the Flowers Product Company and similar enterprises, were skeptical of all of the commercial affiliates of the Order and considered this just another money grabbing proposition.

The idea that the Klan as a fraternal organization could aid its members financially received attention from some of the local



branches during the heyday of the Order as well as from the State and National officials. The Klan at Irwin is an instance. Convinced that their Order was "the biggest thing in America" with hundreds of thousands of members in Pennsylvania alone, and believing that Klansmen would "stick together," the members at Irwin decided to invest in one of the leading hotels in the town. They felt that they would have the guaranteed patronage of their brother Klansmen, many of whom would stop at Irwin as they travelled the Linclon highway or the main line of the Pennsylvania Railroad. The prospect of profit seemed rosy.<sup>11</sup>

At Scottdale, the same hope of financial gain led to the purchase of the Shupe farm adjacent to the borough on the north. Part of this farm they expected to turn into a permanent home for their Klavern and the remainder, they hoped to sell as lots at a substantial profit.<sup>12</sup> Similar projects were undertaken at Indiana and at Lancaster. Unfortunately for the Klansmen who invested in stock or made donations, these enterprises turned out just as badly as had the more spectacular Publishing Company. The combination of declining membership and economic depression were disastrous. Stoically accepting their losses, the Klansmen who remained gave up the economic phases of fraternalism and spent their time planning how their local Klan could assist them to have a good time on Friday nights.

### *References*

1. Practically every issue of "The Kourier Magazine" carried under the heading "Pennsylvania Notes" accounts of such affairs.
2. Held at Scottdale, Pennsylvania, August 28, 1926. The quotations made in reference to the Waynesboro and Carnegie Demonstrations were taken from printed handbills of these affairs.
3. Mimeographed "Instructions for Exalted Cyclops: Standard Plans for the Organization and Operation of Klans in Pennsylvania, 1925."
4. Pamphlet F — 102, (American Printing and Manufacturing Company, Atlanta) entitled, "The Klan in Action," p. 14.
5. *Ibid.*: p. 15.
6. Mimeographed minutes of the State Klorero, Dec. 7, 1924. p. 20.
7. In Latrobe the Lutherans suffered more than others because of their alleged support of the Klan; among them Dave Griffith, optometrist and Kate Weiss, milliner. In Patton, the boycott was more general on all Protestants, according to the Methodist Episcopal minister, W. A. Graham. Although the boycott was rather rigidly maintained while it lasted, in the most instances it was rather temporary. Few cases were reported after 1926.
8. Correspondence of Mrs. Mary I. Goodwin to Rev. Strayer (Feb. 1928).
9. Dan Ensminger of Hershey was one such agent.
10. Proceedings of the Second Imperial Klonsvokation. p. 132 ff.
11. Told the writer in interview with Irwin Klansmen.
12. Told the writer in interviews with the Exalted Cyclops and Kligrapp of the Scott-dale Klavern.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE KLAN AND THE STATE: POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

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*"People vote their resentment, not their appreciation. The average man does not vote for anything, but against something."*—William Bennett Munro

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Political historians have frequently assumed that an organization is important to the extent that it wields political power. This point of view has some justification in the fact that most organizations which have gained power, whether by virtue of numbers or wealth, have used that power to control the processes of government in behalf of their own interests. Modern governments exercise such vast authority over the life of their respective peoples that no institution representing well defined interests can afford to neglect the possible benefits which the government might, with sufficient pressure, be influenced to bestow.

Moreover, it is quite possible, under the democratic processes extant in America, for small groups, well organized as blocs, to wield inordinate power. This is especially true when a general issue divides the voting public almost equally between the two major political parties. Minority blocs whose special interests are paramount to the major issues which split the mass of voters, then hold a balance of power and are able to play one party against the other for concessions.

The Klan leaders were not blind to this fact. As one of them said: "Everybody knows that politicians nowadays cater to all kinds of 'elements' mostly selfish, some corrupt, and some definitely anti-American. They cater to the German vote, the Catholic vote, the Jewish vote, the Italian vote, the boot-leg vote, the vice vote, and sometimes even to the violently criminal vote. What the Klan intends to do is to make them pay some attention to the American vote, the Protestant Christian vote, and the decent, God-fearing, law-abiding vote."<sup>1</sup>

This "God-fearing, Protestant Christian" group had special interests of its own. Feeling that they possessed property rights in their country's culture by the laws of heredity, they wanted to enforce a kind of entail upon it. This claim was candidly stated by the Imperial Wizard himself:

"We believe that the pioneers who built America bequeathed to their own children a priority right to it, the control of it and of its future, and that no one on earth can claim any part of its inheritance except through our generosity."<sup>2</sup>

Klansmen made no apology for this claim. The legalistic assumptions current since the breakdown of the feudal system supported it. It was as sound certainly as the right of a son, regardless of competency, to inherit his father's fortune. Mr. Evans, moreover, refused to admit the possibility of incompetency on the part of the native American inheritors.

"We believe," he continued, "that the American stock, which was bred under highly selective surroundings . . . and should not be mongrelized, . . . automatically and instinctively developed a kind of civilization which is best suited to its own healthy life and growth; and that this cannot be safely changed except by ourselves and along the lines of our own character."<sup>3</sup>

This assertion was tantamount to a claim by the nativists within America that they did legally and should in practice have the right to control and develop the country's civilization. The Klan refused to argue about this dogma. Like the Trinity, it was accepted on faith and the orthodoxy of anyone's "Americanism" was denied if he questioned it. The Klan made no pretense of serving any group which did not accept this as "an instinctive belief" and staked its success upon the theory that it was the conviction of "the great mass of Americans of the old stock."

Now the right to direct the country's civilization necessarily included the control of its political processes. The Klan's political slogan, "Put none but Americans on guard" merely expressed a logical corollary of its article of faith.

While the number of the local Klaverns was still small and the energies of the leaders were needed to increase membership, little attention was given to a political program. There were more exciting and spectacular ways to act. Besides, there was little chance of political success when only a small number of men

belonged to the Order and when success in its undertakings was essential for its growth, indeed, for its very existence. But, as the membership grew, political activity rapidly increased. Some items of the Klan platform, viz, "just laws," "the limitation of immigration," and "the separation of Church and State," were admittedly political in nature and inevitably brought the Order into politics.

Always the Klan worked within the established party organizations. The political success of the A.P.A. had shown the advantage of such procedure compared with the establishment of a separate nativist party like the "American Party" of the 1840's and 1850's. The fact that Pennsylvania was a strong Republican state did, however, make the Klan pay particular attention to the selection of candidates on Republican tickets, especially in the even years when national officials were elected and straight party voting was prevalent. In the alternate years when local officials were selected, the Klan tried to see that the "right" persons were nominated on the tickets of both parties.

Klan officials protested against assertions that they "controlled" the votes of Klansmen. "Information" and "advice" was admittedly given but when the Klansman entered his voting booth "his only compulsion was his conscience." This was, no doubt, theoretically true. When one considers, however, that the average Klansman had little opportunity to hear contrasting points of view or inclination to weigh opposing arguments, those who advised also controlled many of their votes.

The information usually given out was limited at first to such items as the candidate's religious affiliation, his place of birth, and the secret orders to which he belonged. Such information, although secretly given and hence more easily falsified without detection, was accurately reported in every instance which the writer checked. If the candidate was a member of the Knights of Columbus or had affiliations with the B'Nai B'Rith he was automatically eliminated. On the other hand, if the candidate for office was a member of the Masonic fraternity or of a patriotic order such as the Junior Order of American Mechanics or the Patriotic Order of the Sons of America, his prestige was increased.



When the choice lay between the members of the Knights of Columbus and the Patriotic Order Sons of America, it was of course easily made. Often, however, the selection had to be made from candidates all of whom qualified on general grounds. In such a case the Klan tried to secure the election of the individual most favorable to the Order. Klan leaders were, nevertheless, loath to endorse such a person unless he had a good chance of winning. If a candidate who had received Klan endorsement was defeated, it meant the loss of prestige for the Order and Klan officials often preferred to make no recommendation or to recommend all the candidates unless it could be determined in advance that one of the candidates was almost certain to win. Klan caution in this regard was noticeable in connection with the Prohibition issue. Although its principles pledged Klansmen to support "law enforcement," in communities where anti-prohibition sentiment was strong, the Klan avoided open endorsement of "prohibition candidates" likely to be defeated.

The Order, itself, tried not to become an issue for obvious reasons. When it was an issue, all the opposition groups—Jews, Negroes, Catholics, foreigners—united to defeat it. Only if these groups were divided among themselves on other issues could a Klan minority, voting secretly as a bloc, attain its nativist objectives.

Klansmen themselves were frequently candidates for office and as such claimed the support of the other members since their obligation "to go to the assistance" of a Klansman in any way "at his call" was susceptible of broad interpretation even if the qualifying phrase "in things honorable" was remembered. Certainly there was no doubt about the "call." Klansmen travelled about from Klavern to Klavern in behalf of their own candidacies. In some cases they sent out their friends to speak in their behalf. As one Exalted Cyclops confessed, "It got terrible around election time . . . We had to stop one person who travelled around in behalf of Dr. Hunter of Monessen. We had to tell Dr. Hunter to speak for himself. This other fellow was terrible."<sup>4</sup>

Some difficulty was encountered when more than one ambitious Klansman decided to run for the same office. In Texas, the first state where the Klan was politically strong, a method of solving this problem was evolved which was also widely adopted

in Indiana. This method involved the holding of elections within the Klaverns prior to the regular party primaries. Klansmen then chose by secret ballot the one candidate to whom the entire strength of the Klan vote was subsequently given. This kept the Klan vote in a solid block and usually assured the victory of a Klansman for the office. Wide use of this procedure was not made in Pennsylvania,—one reason, perhaps, why the Klan was politically less effective here than in either Texas or Indiana.

The secrecy of Klan action made possible the growth of its political prestige. The Klan gained a reputation in scattered areas of the state and especially in some of the western counties for being a potent political force controlling local elections. In some instances this was true; in others it was fictitious but the general public, not knowing the secret endorsements or last minute changes in recommendations which the Klan might have made, could not gainsay the claims of political victory which the leaders regularly made after every election.

Another factor increasing the political strength of the Klan was the fact that its secrecy made it an incalculable factor in the political equation to the great dismay of the political bosses. Since its membership was secret, its voting strength was unknown and often exaggerated. Local bosses were sometimes frightened into concessions which they would not have made if they had known all the facts. The prestige of the political boss also depended upon victory for his party. Bosses, therefore, exercised care to see that the victors at the party primaries had a good chance of attracting the floating vote and of bringing victory to the party in the elections. They were often inhibited from supporting candidates of their own choice if Klan opposition to them was anticipated. Where the Klan was strong the bosses frequently endorsed Klan candidates, giving them the support of the party machinery just as the Klan in building up its prestige, often endorsed the party candidates who were sure to win anyway. The more astute bosses did not endure this inconvenience for long. They simply encouraged some of their own henchmen to join the local Klaverns, and full information in regard to the Klan's political activities was quickly furnished them.

The Klan not only "advised" its own members but tried also to swing elections by circulating cards upon which were printed

the names of candidates endorsed by the local Klavern. The earliest instance of this which had come to the notice of the writer was during the fall primaries of 1923 in Westmoreland County. Heralded as "The People's Choice," and carrying no acknowledgment of their Klan origin, these cards appeared on doorsteps or in mailboxes on the morning of the election, having been stealthily placed there during the previous night. This practice was widely adopted in the smaller boroughs and villages where there was a rather friendly attitude toward the Order.

There were some districts in which it was found impracticable. For instance, the Exalted Cyclops of the Hazelwood Klavern in Pittsburgh admitted that his group engaged in very little political activity.

"It would have been impossible to do much more than influence ward politics so we didn't try. The city was so large that nothing could be done about city politics by our group. Everyone had his own friends and it would have been useless. I remember advising a friend of mine who was running for office to make his contribution to the Catholic Church. That was the wise thing to do anyway in this ward. But it got out that he was a Klansman and he lost."<sup>5</sup>

Most Klaverns, however, found in local political activities the most successful expression of their power.

When the inquiry turned toward the end to which the Klan used its political strength, the answer was disappointing. The Klan goal was generally a negative one. Seldom was a constructive program of community improvement set up by the Klan toward the attainment of which interested persons from all groups in the community were requested to cooperate. Programs, when they existed at all, were secondary to personal considerations. A man's religious affiliation or place of birth were centers about which political support or hostility revolved.

Religion and birth were, of course, easy to determine—criteria well suited to the common American with little intellectual acumen outside the narrow requirements of his occupation. It required neither power of analysis nor fineness of judgment to determine a man's religion or his place of birth. It required both to create and defend a constructive program. But when such Klan criteria

for political action were criticized as naive and juvenile, Klan leaders protested. Much more was inferred, they said, than just the simple statement that a candidate was a foreigner or a Catholic.

The accident of foreign birth was held to denote an unalterable deficiency in the ability of an individual to really understand and truly appreciate American ideals and principles. Since he had been raised in a different culture, Klansmen held it to be impossible for a foreigner to completely lose his old habits and values. Of course, if he had come to this country in infancy and had gone through the American public schools, there was some hope for him; but any such were negligible in number. Of the great mass of foreigners, Klansmen believed, in the language of their highest official that,

“It is foolish to expect, and it has been proved wrong by experience to hope that people of alien education and different ideals, which are bred into them both by inheritance and their entire training can within a few years understand America, the American Spirit or the American ideals.”<sup>6</sup>

Taken at its face value there was little to be criticized in this attitude. The fallacy lay in the fact that the stereotyped notion of foreigners held by most Klansmen made them accept a statement like that just quoted as descriptive of all foreigners. No credit was given to the fact that American education is in many respects patterned after “alien” education and that while differing in some of their ideals many aliens were staunch supporters of other ideals which Klansmen called “American.” The fact that some foreigners were “anti-American” in some of their habits and ideals was exaggerated into a stereotyped notion which made all foreigners un-American in every respect.

Then too, Klansmen thought of a Catholic not simply as a communicant in the Roman Church but as one who placed his church above his country both in his affection and allegiance. To have Klansmen who were bred in the tradition of John Calvin and John Knox, or at least largely influenced by them, make this condemnation of Roman Catholics sound hypocritical. For, while most Protestants were willing in practice to let the authority of state be their conscience, in theory they were forced to demur.<sup>7</sup>



What then was the difference? It was found in the connotation of the word "Church." Protestant Klansmen, in case the authority of the State was in conflict with what they believed to be God's will, did not deny that their first obligation was to their God. This, of course, was exactly what the Catholics meant when they said that their first obligation, in case of conflict of authorities, was to their Church, e.g. to God's will as interpreted by his own special representatives on earth, "the Church."

Klansmen denied the hypothesis of God's special representatives and held that the pure white light of God's truth was broken into fantastic colors by the quite human prisms of prelate and foreign pope. On the other hand, they were themselves stumped when asked for proof that this white light of truth was transmitted any more perfectly by their own lay consciences, admittedly human also. When the infallibility of both the Roman hierarchy and the individual Protestant's conscience was waived, the problem resolved itself into the speculative question of the relative quantities of truth and light obtainable by the contrasting methods thus supported, a problem insolvable by any known procedure of mathematics. Only the formulas of faith were applicable, which left the answer as disputed as ever because faith, in the respective instances, did not speak the same language. The Klan formula: "The voice of the native, white, Protestant is the voice of God for America" was as little acceptable to many people in America as was "The voice of the Pope, in matters in which he claims jurisdiction, is the voice of God."

More important than this theoretical problem was a more practical consideration. The philosophy of Catholicism, with its dogma of Papal infallibility and its highly centralized form of government gave it power unknown to Protestants whose dogmas of direct communion of the individual with his God and the supremacy of the individual conscience were essentially schismatic and weakening. Time after time Klansmen were reminded: "The Roman Catholic Church is united and its membership is susceptible to manipulation by the priesthood."<sup>8</sup>

The Roman Catholic Church, whose doctrine and government were largely cast during the chaos of the first ten centuries of our era, naturally found *Unity*, as a prerequisite to order and brotherhood, the highest ideal. Division and schism were hand-

maids of chaos and, as a consequence, "dogmatic intolerance" was regarded by her "not only as her incontestible right, but as her sacred duty."<sup>9</sup>

Protestantism was in a measure the expression of the reaction against the regulation of life by a "medieval" Church. The ideal now was found not in *Unity* but in the contrasting principle of *Liberty*. The emotion that attended the discovery that salvation was the result of faith alone was to many like the wild joy of a school child liberated at evening from the compulsions of an officious teacher. It was pleasant to learn that the "inner light" God had bestowed upon each of his elect was adequate to vouchsafe God's will for him if he diligently studied His sacred Word. But if this individualism and freedom of conscience was Protestantism's greatest joy, it was also the source of its greatest weakness. Catholic popes had been able to command kings and guilds. Protestant divines, when they affirmed liberty of conscience, surrendered much of that power.

This dilemma of Protestantism was still current in America when the Klan marshalled its members. Loving liberty, unity was sacrificed. Could the Klan find some method of synthesis which would preserve both? It boasted of its function as "the unifying cement of Protestantism."<sup>10</sup>

But unity on a constructive program was manifestly impossible. Let a national or even a state wide campaign for any specific political or educational reform be proposed, and Klansmen differed about its advisability. Let strict enforcement of the Volstead Act be advocated, some Klaverns cooperated while others refused their support.

Like a family whose non-cooperative individualistic members unite only against complaining outsiders, Klansmen found that they could really act unitedly only by joining in a crusade against those outsiders whom they feared were taking advantage of the weakness Protestants had brought upon themselves by claiming the right to differ. In its general aspects, therefore, the Klan program was almost predestined to be negative. Klansmen would not admit this. Indeed, they were vociferous in its denial: "We are not anti-Jewish; we are not anti-Negro, we are not anti-foreigner; in fact we are not anti-anything. We are simply pro-American."<sup>11</sup> Of course no exact line can be drawn between the

"pro" and "anti" attitudes thus referred to. One does work in behalf of his own cause when he weakens his opponents, but Klansmen who called their strictures against Catholics and foreigners a Pro-American activity, merely refused to recognize the distinction between "pro" and "anti". This attitude was as absurd as to take the point of view that advertising slogans like "Reach for a Lucky instead of a Sweet" are not anti-anything but essentially positive and justifiable.

In spite of Klan denials which, although illogical, were in most cases sincere enough, a large part of the Klan's political activity was negative. An attempt was made to destroy the political power and weaken the influence of individuals and groups which Klansmen considered "un-American." In Pennsylvania this was chiefly confined to activity against the Catholic Church and all efforts of its communicants to secure political office or power.\*

Every Catholic public official, be he policeman or burgess, school director or tax collector, councilman or congressman must, if possible, be turned out of office and no Catholics elected. While Klansmen would not assert that an individual's affiliation with the Catholic Church pre-determined his beliefs about traffic regulations or tariffs, there was a general feeling that the election of every additional Catholic to public office would hasten the time when our government would be turned over to a foreign Pope for whom indeed a place of residence was already being prepared, so it was said, within the walls of the Catholic University at Washington, D. C.

Nor was that fateful day believed to be far distant. Many Klansmen were convinced that the nation had narrowly escaped that "catastrophe" during the administration of Woodrow Wilson when (so they asserted) a Catholic shared the White House as his wife, when Secretary Tumulty, "a Catholic of the Catholics commanded the entrance to the White House,"<sup>12</sup> when, according to widely circulated reports, "over seventy per cent of all appointments made by President Wilson were Catholics . . . (and) 62 per cent of all offices in the United States, both elective and appointive were held by Roman Catholics."<sup>13</sup> While the

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\*When this Catholic factor was not a part of the political setting of a Klavern, its political efforts were generally frustrated by factional struggles between Klansmen for office or else the Klavern was merely an adjunct to the dominant political party in its locality.

worst of their predictions had not yet been fulfilled, The Grand Dragon of Pennsylvania warned all "faithful and esteemed Klansmen" that the Roman Hierarchy was still "determined to present our fair country as a gift to the Pope of Rome."<sup>14</sup>

Although Klansmen were never very clear about the effect such an eventuality would have upon our institutions generally, the belief was commonly held among them that four things would result. In the first place, they believed that the Catholics, wherever they secured a controlling influence in the American government, would use the agencies of government to strengthen the Catholic Church and that government funds would be appropriated to support the Catholic parochial schools. Thus the American principle of the separation of church and state would be abandoned.

In the second place, Klansmen feared that the institution of civil marriage would be in danger. This they inferred from the fact that the Catholic Church refused to recognize the validity of the civil ceremony for the marriage of its communicants.

Third, whether or not facts could be gathered which showed that American Catholics had been tolerant of other Christian denominations, it was held that the ruling "hierarchy" of the Roman Church had never accepted tolerance as a principle, but only as a temporary policy which the peculiar circumstances in America made necessary.

Finally, Klansmen believed that the philosophy of the Roman Church, elevating as it does the authority of the Pope, was not democratic but autocratic and, when Catholics claimed that "papal infallibility" was only claimed for utterances made ex-cathedra on matters of faith and morals and did not extend to political matters, Klansmen refused to believe them. In the words of Grand Dragon H. C. Shaw, "the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church are fundamentally hostile to the spirit, ideals, and institutions of our Republic"<sup>14</sup> which made it unwise to have persons brought up under this doctrine in public office here in America.

Such beliefs were repeatedly expressed in local Klaverns and acted upon in elections with the result that Catholic candidates for local offices were defeated in many parts of the state. In national politics the presidential campaign of 1928 was the most evident case of Klan pressure to defeat a Catholic for office.



Prior to that campaign, the state office of the Klan had taken little interest in politics of a state wide or national character. While Sam D. Rich was King Kleagle (or Imperial Representative) his own lack of interest in politics was reflected by virtually all the state officers. There is considerable evidence to show that Gifford Pinchot received favorable endorsement by many local Klaverns and Lemuel D. Peoples of the State Office took some interest in the success of his candidacy presumably with the consent of his superiors.\* In the presidential campaign of 1924, there was little if any effort made against the Democratic candidate, John W. Davis, even though he denounced the Klan by name in his speech at Sea Girt, New Jersey, on August 22. More effort was made to discourage Pennsylvania Klansmen from supporting the candidacy of Robert M. LaFollette. On October 6 and 7, 1924, at Conneaut Lake Park was held the largest Klan gathering in the state immediately prior to the election of that year. Time was taken on that occasion by both Sam D. Rich and Imperial Wizard Evans to denounce LaFollette as a radical and to predict turmoil and disaster if he were elected president.<sup>15</sup>

Against the candidacy of Alfred E. Smith the Klan put forth the most vigorous political effort of its career in Pennsylvania. The leadership of the Pennsylvania realm had passed by that time from Rich—and several temporary incumbents—to Rev. Herbert C. Shaw, an ex-Methodist minister from the South who had served a short pastorate in Erie, Pennsylvania. He was an outspoken anti-Catholic and, unlike Rich, was much interested in national politics. The correspondence from Shaw's office began, early in 1927, to prepare for the coming presidential struggle. "What is the Ku Klux Klan's next great battle?" he wrote in March of that year, and emphatically answered, "The battle to prevent the Roman hierarchy from seating Mr. Al Smith in the Presidential chair."<sup>16</sup>

Programs for Klavern meetings were suggested by the State office. Catechetical exercises were prepared and sent out containing references to the recent Eucharistic Congress at Chicago and the celebration of High Mass on the Sesqui Centennial grounds at Philadelphia. The one was "the Roman Catholic Hierarchy's"

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\*In correspondence with Mr. Pinchot he declined either to corroborate or deny this allegation.

western background for the Al Smith candidacy, the other its eastern background "calculated to over-awe (these sections) by a display of numerical strength." <sup>17</sup> To arouse the fears of earnest Klansmen, they were told that Smith had many advantages in the coming election. "The Roman Catholic Church controls to a great extent the press of the country." Multitudes of Republican Catholics would support Mr. Smith because "their love of Church will supplant love of party." The Ku Klux Klan was the only organization which stood boldly out against "Romanism" and "nullification" to stem the tide. Solemn warning was given of the consequences of Mr. Smith's election: "It is a foregone conclusion that he will remove every Protestant from office that he can safely remove and put a Knight of Columbus in his place . . . Without doubt he will seek occasion to use the armed forces of our Country to restore the Roman Catholic yoke to the neck of the Mexican People." "Why is the Ku Klux Klan opposed to Mr. Smith for President?" concludes the catechism, and as if summarizing all the long list of reasons the answer is given: because being a Catholic, he is "subservient to and dominated by the Papacy."

The Democratic convention at Houston, faced with the fact that Smith was the strongest man of the party, succumbed to his nomination as inevitable and whipped up their courage by stoutly asserting the historic liberalism of the party and by roundly applauding speeches like that of Senator Robinson who shouted, "Jefferson glorified in the Virginia Statute of religious freedom. He rejoiced in the provision of the constitution that declares no religious test shall be required as a qualification for an office of trust in the United States." <sup>18</sup> Democratic Klansmen who found themselves powerless at Houston were not as helpless in their local communities. Imperial Wizard Hiram W. Evans, the head of the national organization, transferred his base of operations from Atlanta to Washington, D. C., and with an increased staff directed the fight against Smith's election. Since Republican voters in Pennsylvania outnumbered Democratic voters more than 3.5 to 1, less effort was concentrated upon Pennsylvania than on New York State. On the other hand, high powered orators like Senator Heflin, of Alabama, were brought into Pennsylvania and large audiences were harangued. Grand Dragon Shaw denounced

the Catholics on every appropriate occasion making much mention of the political designs of the "hierarchy" which he professed to have learned at the Chicago Eucharistic Congress into which he claimed he had gained entrance disguised as a priest. A special effort was made to get Klansmen to subscribe personally to the vitriolic *Fellowship Forum* and, when this effort failed to secure the hoped for circulation, to get the local Klaverns to use some of their monies to purchase copies for free distribution.

When the election returns were in and Herbert Hoover had gained the presidency by a substantial majority, the Klan was loud in its claim that it had saved the country from a papist. A survey of the returns in Pennsylvania is sufficient commentary upon the revelance of this claim in this state. It must be remembered, of course, that while Pennsylvania had some 225,000 to 300,000 Klansmen enrolled in the Order at its peak, by 1928 (April) that number had shrunk to a mere 26,000 and continued to decrease during the year. The counties listed in the table below are counties in which the Klan had been strong and, in several instances, was still strong. The figures in parenthesis listed under the 1928 columns are the votes cast for the gubernatorial candidates: Reed on the Republican ticket and McNair on the Democratic ticket. They are included because they offer a slight check on the presidential vote.

TABLE 19

1924:		<i>Democratic</i>	
<i>County</i>	<i>Republican</i> <i>(Harding)</i>	<i>(Davis)</i>	<i>Per cent of</i> <i>total vote</i>
Allegheny . . . .	149,296	21,984	12.8
Westmoreland	34,522	10,223	22.8
Philadelphia ..	347,457	54,213	13.4
Schuylkill . . . .	34,578	10,111	22.8
Luzerne . . . . .	46,475	14,500	23.7
Washington ..	22,315	6,706	23.1
Lehigh . . . . .	20,826	10,415	33.3
York . . . . .	23,044	15,600	40.3

1928:

<i>County</i>	<i>Republican</i>	<i>Democratic</i>	<i>Per cent of total vote</i>
	<i>Hoover (Reed)</i>	<i>Smith (McNair)</i>	
Allegheny . . . .	215,678 (212,976 Reed)	160,733 (144,855 McNair)	45.3
Westmoreland	51,760 (47,500 Reed)	30,587 (29,270 McNair)	37.1
Philadelphia ..	420,320 (412,747 Reed)	276,573 (259,819 McNair)	39.6
Schuylkill . . . .	46,033 (45,512 Reed)	40,424 (37,350 McNair)	46.1
Luzerne . . . . .	67,872 (66,869 Reed)	73,319 (68,299 McNair)	51.9
Washington ..	31,099 (28,991 Reed)	17,149 (16,966 McNair)	35.5
Lehigh . . . . .	40,291 (37,643 Reed)	13,463 (14,237 McNair)	25.0
York . . . . .	45,791 (36,602 Reed)	11,215 (17,512 McNair)	19.8

It will be observed from these figures that in York and Lehigh Counties where the percentage of Catholic population was small, the increase in Republican votes was much greater than the increase in Democratic votes. It is quite evident, also, that in every section in which there was a substantial Catholic group, the effect of the campaign had been to increase the Smith vote by a much larger percentage than the Hoover vote. It is, of course, impossible to determine how much of the increase in the Republican vote was due to the Klan activity in getting out the Protestant vote, or, on the other hand, how much the Klan was responsible for stirring Catholics to activity and enhancing the Smith vote. That it was as potent in the latter regard as it was in the former is open to little doubt.

A narrower investigation of the election returns of smaller districts where flourishing Klaverns existed shows precisely the same result.<sup>19</sup>



## VOTES POLLED BY THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

<i>Town</i>	1924		1928	
	<i>Republican</i>	<i>Democratic</i>	<i>Republican</i>	<i>Democratic</i>
Altoona . . . . .	8,687	2,146	13,718	7,297
Bedford* . . . . .	756	510	901	312
Carnegie . . . . .	1,684	245	2,099	1,928
Homestead . . . . .	2,277	190	1,480	4,141
Indiana . . . . .	2,810	404	3,481	645
McKeesport . . . . .	6,303	1,095	8,534	5,173
Mt. Pleasant . . . . .	824	327	1,214	868
Shamokin . . . . .	4,279	1,388	5,912	3,555
York* . . . . .	8,275	4,020	14,246	4,554

\*These places had relatively few Catholics.

The Pennsylvania Klan made but one attempt to introduce a legislative program into the State Legislature. This took place when a battery of four bills were prepared by the Order and introduced into the Assembly by Representative George G. Weber, of DuBois, on February 21, 1927. While these bills died in the Committee on Judiciary General to which they were referred, their content is descriptive of the focal points of Klan policy. Three of the four bills were directed against the Catholic Church and its subsidiary organizations. The first would by one direct blow have made the organization of Knights of Columbus and certain other Catholic Orders and Associations impossible by making it a felony punishable by from one to ten years hard labor in the State Penitentiary to hold membership "in any secret oath-bound corporation, association or society organized within this Commonwealth when the qualifications to membership is membership also in either a corporation, association or society whose seat of government is in a foreign country or whose chief executive officer is not a citizen of the United States."

A second bill proposed to stop criticism of civil marriage—presumably by Catholics—by making it a misdemeanor "punishable by a fine of \$300 to \$1000 and imprisonment of three to twelve months to question the validity or the sanctity of any marriage or to reflect upon the morality of the marital state or to deny the legitimacy of the issue of any marriage when such marriage has been or is about to be entered into and solemnized in accordance with the statutes of this Commonwealth or of any other State." The third bill also related to marriage. Any per-

son qualified to perform the marriage ceremony was forbidden to "persuade, entice or induce said parties (to the marriage) to enter into any contract, agreement, or stipulation, oral or in writing, to educate or train the issue of said marriage according to the teachings or tenets of any particular church, sect, religion, or belief." The last of the Klan bills showed the attitude of the Klan toward the question of inter-marriage between the Negroes and whites. Such inter-marriage was, by the terms of the bill, "forever prohibited." It was made a felony for any minister or other authorized official to unite any such persons in marriage, on penalty of a maximum fine of \$5,000 and a maximum imprisonment of five years.

A number of Klansmen in the Assembly credited the failure to secure the passage of this legislation to the lack of skill on the part of the sponsor of the bills. It is true that he had little ability and no experience in handling matters of this kind. But even if the sponsorship of these bills had been in different hands, there was little hope of pushing through measures which were so discriminatory. Besides, there was insufficient Klan strength in the Assembly to make it worthwhile for other "interests" to bargain with the Klansmen.

Turning to national affairs, the Klan took some interest in immigration restriction and claimed a considerable share of the glory for the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924. There is little evidence, however, that the Pennsylvania organization took an active part in the matter. Senator James Reed, of Pennsylvania, sponsored the bill in the Senate and would certainly have been familiar with interested groups which might have given him support. Reed asserts, however, that he was not aware of any support given to the measure by the Klan in Pennsylvania, nor, for that matter, by a Klan lobby at Washington.<sup>20</sup>

The Klan did directly oppose our entrance into the League of Nations and World Court. Klan membership reflected the normally isolationist attitude and the fears of the average Americans that we would be drawn into entangling alliances. Characteristically, however, the reasons given by Klansmen were primarily neither economic nor political. It was the predominance of Catholic countries in the League and World Court and the consequent dangers to American Protestantism that made them bad.

The Realm Office circularized its members and urged them to purchase folders for distribution in public places. One of these circulars, identified as Leaflet No. 4 in the correspondence of the Realm Office was entitled, "Why the Ku Klux Klan Opposed the World Court." It was regarded as one of the best issued. On the back of the Leaflet was the maxim, "The Ku Klux Klan holds that American Questions should be settled by *Americans in America*. Inside was merely the following brief statement.

#### WORLD COURT OFFICERS

President, M. De La Torriente Perez of Cuba—Catholic.  
 Vice-Presidents, M. Pusta of Esthonia—Catholic, Count De Gimeno of Spain—Catholic, M. Fortoul of Venezuela—Catholic, Sir Lord Robert Cecil of England—Protestant.  
 (80% Catholic\*)

#### COUNCIL OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Advised by the World Court

M. Vandervelde of Belgium—Catholic.  
 M. DeMello Franco of Brazil—Catholic.  
 Dr. Benes of Czechoslovakia—Catholic.  
 M. Briand of France—Catholic.  
 M. Scialoga of Italy—Catholic.  
 M. Quero Boule of Spain—Catholic.  
 M. Sjöberg of Sweden—Catholic.  
 Sir Austen Chamberlain of Great Britain—Protestant.  
 Viscount Ishii of Japan—Shinto.  
 (Council 70% Catholic\*)

#### THE ASSEMBLY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Abyssinia—three—Catholic.	Bulgaria—three—Catholic.
Albania—two—Catholic.	Finland—three—Catholic.
Austria—two—Catholic.	France—twenty-four—
Belgium—six—Catholic.	Catholic.
Brazil—six—Catholic.	etc., etc., etc.

(Assembly membership 286. Catholic 192, Protestant 94)

\*Catholic—one subservient to and dominated by the papacy.

The cancellation or reduction of foreign war debt owed to the U. S. was also consistently opposed in the literature of the Klan, but since the policy of our State Department was in line with Klan beliefs, there was no occasion for the Klan to get excited about this matter. There was, however, one other item of foreign

policy which aroused the Realm office to feverish activity. This was "the Mexican Question." In an attempt to enforce its revised Constitution, Mexico had been charged by certain American interests with violations of their rights. There was considerable correspondence between our Department of State and the Mexican government. But the interest which the Klan took in this controversy was not economic. Nowhere in the literature of the Order is there any evidence that the Klan leaders understood the technical, legal or commercial matters under dispute. They opposed intervention in the affairs of Mexico not because they were hostile to American trade or investments in Mexico, but because it appeared that the Catholics wanted American intervention.

The new Mexican Constitution besides trying to repatriate certain mineral and land resources had also tried to secularize politics and education. As a means to this latter end foreign priests were forbidden to remain within the country, certain monasteries and nunneries were abolished and provision was made for public education under state control. The loss of privilege suffered by the Roman Church in Mexico naturally aroused the sympathy of many American Catholics, some of whom openly expressed the wish that the U. S. would intervene in order to preserve at once American economic interests and religious freedom.

This interest of American Catholics in the Mexican situation was a source of alarm for the Klansmen. They saw in it an attempt of the Roman Church to "involve this country in a war with Mexico." Concealing its aim to regain thereby its "lost privileges and power," the Roman Church was laying down "a clever smoke screen of protecting American lives and property." Klansmen held that Secretary Kellogg had been misled by Catholics "to believe that the Mexican Government's casting off the yoke of Rome is Bolshevism." They broadcast the fact that the Knights of Columbus had raised a million dollars to propagandize for intervention, and prophesied that President Coolidge was ready to "lay a strong hand upon Mexico" as soon as the adjournment of Congress would free him from Congressional interference. The Realm Office encouraged all Klansmen to arouse themselves to meet the crisis and informed the local klaverns that it had not been negligent of its duty but had distributed



"upwards of one hundred thousand four-page Mexican Leaflets" and had in addition "assisted with Bulletins and speakers."<sup>21</sup>

With the mention of the anti-Smith campaign, the effort to prevent the entrance of the United States into the League of Nations and the World Court and the flurry of excitement over a feared U. S. intervention in Mexico to aid the Catholic Church, the list of political activities of any national importance undertaken by the Klan in Pennsylvania is exhausted. After 1928 the Order, with its greatly depleted membership became increasingly just another patriotic society. In its literature it supported the big army and navy program, applauded the Daughters of the American Revolution, and even expressed good will toward Hitler because his anti-Semitic policy was felt to be somewhat akin to its own racial attitude.

Between the lines of much of its propaganda one could read the implication that it might not be a bad thing for the United States if a fascist movement with the Klan in the role of leadership were to develop here. But the dwindling membership of the Order gave no promise of that. Perhaps it was more to keep the Klan from disintegrating altogether than to produce the fear prerequisite for a large grant of power to a dictator that the Klan leaders after 1931 simulated increasing concern over the growth of radicalism within the country and substituted "the menace of communism" for the fading spectre of Romanism.

### *References*

1. Quoted by Stanley Frost in the *Outlook*, vol. 136, p. 66.
2. Hiram Wesley Evans in the *Forum*, vol. 74, p. 801, December, 1925.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Told to the writer by Ross Kalp, E. C. of Scottdale Klavern.
5. Told to the writer by Sterrett L. Clark, E. C. of Hazelwood Klavern.
6. Hiram W. Evans in the *Outlook*, vol. 136, p. 64.
7. Compare the protests of American Protestants to the Supreme Court Decision in the *MacIntosh Case*. See for instance *Christian Century*, June 10, 1931, p. 776; July 1, 1931, p. 878; Jan. 20, 1932, p. 84; also *Lit. Dig.* Jan. 25, 1930, p. 14.
8. For example, see: Correspondence of H. C. Shaw to the Exalted Cyclops of the Realm, March 29, 1927.
9. *Catholic Encyclopedia*: Article on "Tolerance."
10. Klan Leaflet, Form C-100.
11. There was not a single Klan Exalted Cyclops or state official with whom the writer raised this question who did not deny that the Klan's program was negative. See also manuscript of a speech delivered many times by Rev. J. F. Strayer; also *Proceedings of the Second Imperial Klonyokation*, p. 35: "The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan is not in any sense an anti-organization..."
12. Circular letter by H. C. Shaw to all the Exalted Cyclops of the Realm, March 28, 1927.
13. Anonymous pamphlet entitled "Food for Thought" which was circulated among Klansmen of Pennsylvania and elsewhere.
14. Circular letter by H. C. Shaw to "Faithful and Esteemed Klansmen," June 16, 1927.
15. *Pittsburgh Gazette Times*, October 7, 1924.

*References*

16. Correspondence of Shaw to his Exalted Cyclops, March 29, 1927.
17. Mimeographed program sent out from the State office under date of March 29, 1927.
18. Quoted from the official report of the Convention by Michael Williams in "The Shadow of the Pope," p. 187.
19. Election returns for the 1924 election taken from the "Pennsylvania State Manual" formerly "Smull's" 1925-26, p. 432 following. Figures for the 1928 election taken from the "Pennsylvania Manual" 1929, p. 527 following.
20. By correspondence with the author.
21. Quotations relative to Mexican intervention were taken from mimeographed circulars sent from Shaw's office to all the Klaverns in the State. Undated, they were distributed in the spring or summer of 1927.

## CHAPTER 8

### THE KLAN AND THE CHURCH: RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES OF THE ORDER

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*"Men will wrangle for religion; write for it; fight for it; die for it; anything but live for it."—Caleb Colton*

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Founded by a one-time Methodist preacher, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan boasted of their devotion to religion. The purpose of the Order was to attain the "solidarity of Protestants for Social, Civic, and Moral Defense and Progress."<sup>1</sup> Its symbol was a cross. Its "Kreed" asserted that Klansmen "reverentially acknowledge the majesty and supremacy of the Divine Being, and recognize the goodness and providence of the Same."<sup>2</sup> One of the officials of every klavern was a chaplain called a Kludd. At each meeting he delivered an opening prayer, expressed to God the hope that Klansmen might "forsake the bad and choose and strive for the good, remembering always that the living Christ is a Klansman's criterion of character."<sup>3</sup> In the closing ceremony of the klavern, in answer to the Exalted Cyclop's inquiry, "How speaketh the oracles of our God?", the Kludd arose to say: "Thou shall worship the Lord thy God. Render unto the State the things which are the State's. Love the brotherhood, honor the king. Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ."<sup>4</sup> A "kloxology" was raised to "God of eternity" and "the blessings of God" were called down upon them in benediction. All this was done before an altar, which was an essential piece of equipment of every klavern.

In the naturalization ceremony by which applicants were invested with membership in the Order, the applicant was obliged to affirm his belief in "the tenets of the Christian religion," was anointed with "a transparent, life-giving, powerful, God-given fluid . . . divinely distilled,"<sup>6</sup> and was dedicated by prayer "to

that sublime work harmonic with God's will and purpose in our creation." <sup>7</sup> Thus was it officially assumed that Klansmen were servants of the Lord God for whose benediction they had no hesitancy in asking.

Not only were klavern meetings and initiation ceremonies given a religious cast but national and state conventions, especially in the first few years of the Order's history, were conducted in an atmosphere of religious devotion deliberately produced by the leaders. Mention of Christian ideals and the invocation of God's guidance were common. H. E. Evans, addressing the Imperial Klonsvocation in 1924 (Kansas City, Mo.), tactfully minimizing the importance of his own leadership, asserted that "God has done a greater thing for the Klan than that of giving it human leadership. He has given it His Own Leadership. The Lord has guided us and shaped the events in which we rejoice. This fact . . . must increase our faith in the Klan,—in its growth in grace and power, in its mission, in its final complete victory." In all important gatherings of the Klan, each day's session was begun with a devotional service. The favorite Scripture reading was the familiar admonition of St. Paul to his Roman brethren to "think soberly . . . be kindly affectioned . . . recompense to no man evil for evil . . . live peaceably with all men." There is evidence that some Klan leaders held before Klansmen a high spiritual idealism and devotion. To quote from one of them:

"My brethren, I never enter a Klavern and stand before a prepared altar where the Fiery Cross looks down upon me, its Holy Light blazing forth all the sacred traditions of the past, nor behold it as it gives light to the feet of Klansmen in parades through the streets of a great city, that I do not wish that I myself and every Klansman in the nation . . . could behold that Cross as Paul beheld it, and cry with him: 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' If every Klansman in the nation could say that with Paul, America would be safe for Americans from this day to the end of time. . . .

"Keeping step with the Master and daily striving to emulate His example—this is the sacrifice, if sacrifice it may be called, which Klansmen offer that America and the world may be saved. Are you ready to lay all your consecrated power of manhood on the altar this afternoon as a token of



love and gratitude to Him, and to say: 'By the help of Almighty God, I determine that from this hour on I will so live that I can hand down to future generations the standard of what a real American ought to be; that I will seek to make America the first of all the nations to fulfill the will of God and to crown Jesus Lord of all?'<sup>9</sup>

There is no doubt that many honest Klansmen were inspired by the religious activities of the Order to consecrate themselves to principles which they believed, whether mistaken or not, were consistent with Christian teachings. Returning from the Kansas City Klonvokation of 1924 one Pennsylvania Exalted Cyclops observed to the writer: "I've attended a lot of church gatherings and conventions both of my own and other denominations but I never attended one where the revival spirit was as pronounced as it was at the Klan Klonvokation."<sup>10</sup>

It is not true, however, to infer that the religious fervor which characterized a few great inspirational gatherings of the Klan was typical of the general run of state meetings in Pennsylvania. Called Kloreros, these annual meetings were likewise opened with devotional exercises. Rev. J. W. Dempster, of Crafton, was conspicuous as a leader of these services for the first few years that they were held. Nevertheless, the minutes of these meetings gives one the impression that the devotions were not an integral part of the programs, being largely perfunctory like the routine prayers at the opening of a session of Congress or the required ten verses of scripture and the repetition of the Lord's Prayer at the start of the day's work in the public schools. The spirit invoked by the officiating minister was not noticeably present as the business of the session was taken up.

Locally, a few klans maintained a rather sustained evangelistic atmosphere over a considerable period. It was characteristic of the early part of the movement, however, and of those Klaverns which had enrolled most of the ministers of their communities. While the number of such instances was by no means large enough to consider them typical of the movement, it can likewise be said that the absence of any expression of religious devotion other than that in the ritual was also typical of only a small percentage of the local units.

When initiation ceremonies grew wearisome or ceased and the business to be transacted was small, klavern programs were often pieced out with song services which had a religious or semi-religious character. Among the standard hymns which were considered by Klansmen to be appropriate were the familiar "Blest Be the Tie That Binds" and "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." "The Old Rugged Cross" became almost an official hymn. Although sometimes sung with the original words of its author, it was more often turned into a campaign song by changing the chorus to read, "I will cherish the bright Fiery Cross . . . ." The ingenuity of Klansmen found considerable expression in making appropriate changes in familiar hymns to suit the Klan symbolism. Thus "There's a Church in the Valley by the Wild-wood" became "There's a Cross That is Burning in the Wild-wood"; "Onward, Christian Soldiers" became "Onward, Valiant Klansmen"; and "Let the Lower Lights Be Burning" became:

"Let the fiery cross be burning,  
Spread its beams o'er land and sea;  
Satan's wiles forever spurning,  
Bringing Christ to you and me."

In Klan ideology, religion and patriotism were often naturally and unconsciously mingled. It is doubtful if most Klansmen conceived of "love of God" and "love of country" as distinct things. They thought of America, as the Israelites had of Canaan, as God's special gift to the people whose culture He wished to preserve, the inference being that this culture was akin to God's will for America and through America for the whole world. At its worst, Klan thinking turned the non-racial religion of Christianity into one as narrowly national and racial as was the Jehovah worship of the Israelites during the period of the Judges. God became merely the press agent of the Pilgrim Fathers.

Rev. Paul S. Wight, who found in Klan publicity a very lucrative way to serve God and his own Christian (Campbelite) Church and who finally established "The International Music Company" to distribute song booklets and victrola records to Klansmen, is the author of the following verses illustrating this synthesis of patriotism and religion:

KLANSMAN'S JUBILEE SONG<sup>11</sup>

(Tune: Battle Hymn of the Republic)

We rally 'round Old Glory in our robes of spotless white;  
 While the fiery cross is burning, in the silent silv'ry night.  
 Come join our glorious army in the cause of God and Right.  
 The Klan is marching on . . .

The blessed Pilgrim Fathers, fought and died for liberty.  
 They sailed through troubled waters, died that we might be  
 made free.

Oh, shall we dare surrender? No! Our battle cry shall be:  
 "God's truth is marching on."

Oh, yes, we stand for liberty, for freedom of our land;  
 The same as our dear fathers' won from cruel tyrant's hand.  
 We'll keep the sacred heritage, for in His might we stand,  
 As we go marching on.

Another "religious" practice which was characteristic of Klans throughout the state consisted of church visitations. Just as their song services combined religious worship with "kluxing" and the building of morale, so these visitations had a double purpose. They passed for devoutness and advertised the Order as well. The most common form of this practice was to come to the church in a body dressed in full regalia. Usually there was some attempt made to secure the permission of the minister or other important official of the church and to have provision made for a room in which to robe and reserved seats adequate to accommodate them in the auditorium. This latter allowed them to march in after the usual audience had assembled and after the service had commenced. The escorting ushers, the orderly marching, the waiting audience, it was felt, all added dignity and impressiveness to the ceremony. Sometimes the Klansmen would contribute a special song to the service; often they merely sat quietly and gave as much attention to the minister's remarks as their uncomfortable bodies, perspiring under their robes, would allow.

Klansmen were quite conscious of the publicity value of these occasions and in view of this fact and the anticipation of a news item in the local paper, they were quite willing to pay for value received. When the collection plates were passed they were generous in their contributions, often giving as much as a dollar

each. Many a pastor and deacon of an impoverished church welcomed visitations for this pecuniary benefit. Regarding the effect of these donations upon Klansmen, one district official boasted that there had been an increase in liberality among the Klan members. "Around Reading," said this official, "the 'Dutch' were surprisingly tight in the matter of basket contributions at church. Ordinarily they put in just a penny or two. One of the first times we went to a service, each of us put in a silver dollar. It was interesting to hear these dropping one after another into the plates. The plates actually became so heavy that they were annoying. After that experience we usually gave dollar bills folded in the shape of the letter 'K.' I think we actually got some of our people used to contributing a decent sum to the church collections."<sup>12</sup> But, since no attempt was made by this official to determine the actual contributions of Klansmen when attending church as ordinary communicants, the inference made must be interpreted as purely conjectural.

Moreover, such church visitations were hardly regular enough to be habit forming in any respect. If two were made yearly, a Klan usually congratulated itself upon its cooperation with the regular activities of the church. Besides, the advertising value of such occasions depended in part upon their unusualness. The infrequency of this type of church visitation was also due to the fact that by no means all Protestant ministers welcomed the robed Klansmen. Among ministers who were not Klan members, few indeed wished to have them come. The few who did grant them permission were often personally rewarded. "I got twenty-five dollars in a lump sum," said one such minister, "and later five and ten dollar bills to total sixty-five dollars. The Klan wanted the publicity."<sup>13</sup>

Another type of visitation, while not so frequently attempted, also served to identify the Klan as an Order which sanctioned and supported the regular work of the Protestant churches. The following procedure was used. A few Klansmen in full regalia and with the visors of their hoods down to prevent their identification would enter the service unannounced, often interrupting the minister in the midst of a sermon. Two Klansmen, perhaps, would enter each door leading into the auditorium and stand on guard while two or four others would march down the center



aisle to the pulpit, give the minister an envelope, about face, march from the building and disappear in waiting cars. If well staged such a visitation was startling in its effect, having much of the dramatic quality of a hold-up in broad daylight. The minister whose service was thus interrupted and who generally had difficulty in recapturing the attention of his audience was compensated by receiving a letter commending his work and a small personal donation, usually from ten to twenty-five dollars in amount.

After reviewing these religious or semi-religious practices of the Klan the question naturally arises: what was the effect of the Order upon the religious life of the individual members? The testimony given was varied. "Men prayed in my Klavern meetings who I am sure never prayed before, at least in public," said one Exalted Cyclops.<sup>14</sup> "The Klan brought a religious influence about a class of men who seldom went to any church service," said another.<sup>15</sup> Klansmen from different parts of the state told the writer that they were under the impression that it was a requirement of the Order that members must attend church services. While there was no official rule of this kind, their testimony bears witness to the fact that church attendance was at least strongly recommended by some Exalted Cyclops. On the other hand, a secretary of another local Klavern testified: "We didn't tell the men to go to church. We told them to go home and read their Bibles and carry out what they found there. If they did that, they couldn't go wrong."<sup>16</sup>

In general, the testimony warrants the confident assertion that the Klan, although it claimed to be a militant Protestant Order, did not contribute much to the growth of membership either of the churches or of Sunday Schools and Bible study groups. This was not surprising. Many Protestant church members gladly joined the Klan because they found it an institution which gave expression to their beliefs and fears by action which the churches refused to take. Certain considerations, however, prevented as natural a movement from the Klan into the churches. The Klan was not engaged in proselytizing non-Protestants or converting disbelievers like the regular missionary societies. It antagonized rather than converted those of differing beliefs. Already nominal Protestants or non-church goers with Protestant background, Klansmen did not gravitate into the churches because the churches

furnished nothing essential to their needs—with one exception to be noted later.

Desiring inspiration for their program of direct action, of political and often physical coercion, Klansmen found the churches—save in the prohibition struggle—committed to the milder processes of persuasion and spiritual regeneration. Eager for battle against foes whom they considered both disciplined and unscrupulous, they found little stimulus in the preachment of the redeeming power of love. The Klan secured more inspiration from the vigorously anti-Catholic papers like *The Menace* and the *Fellowship Forum* and from their own professional organizers and press than from the churches. The goal of the Klan was not primarily the development of religious devotion but the development and expression of religious partisanship. Klansmen had graduated, so to speak, from the elementary school of the church or, like self-educated men, had acquired “an equivalent training” outside her walls. They felt little need to go back to her for inspiration just as the adult finds it unnecessary to return to his primer and lexicon. This is the reason why the Klan, while its membership included many non-churchgoers, did not measurably swell the church congregations.

On the other hand, the churches did have prestige and the Klan badly needed that. Indeed, it was indispensable, and the Klan, therefore, tried to strengthen every connection with the churches which could possibly be established. This explains the insistence of the Klan leaders that their Order was “Protestantism militant”; that it was “Protestantism’s Ally,” doing in civil life that which the churches, being strictly religious institutions, could not undertake without violating the principle of “separation of church and state.”<sup>17</sup> This explains why Klansmen who enjoyed the heady wine of Klan activity and found the program of the churches flat in comparison, were so eager to profess their loyalty to Protestantism. To secure recognition by the churches they quite willingly gave periodic donations and praise. When repulsed, the general attitude of Klansmen was that of disappointment and anger. They would show the church even to the extent of “breaking” hostile ministers and of encouraging withdrawals from their congregations.

There were, of course, specific instances which varied from the general rule described above. For example, the first minister in the city of Pittsburgh to join the Klan was the pastor of an impoverished Methodist Protestant parish in North Side. The Klan deliberately built its membership and, with Klan assistance, it enjoyed a rather flourishing condition for a time. While this is the only instance of its kind that has come to the attention of the writer, there were many cases where churches whose pastors were Klansmen gained at the expense of other churches in the community whose pastors were openly hostile to the Klan. This movement of Klansmen into churches whose pastors were themselves Klansmen was never large and consisted generally of radical individuals who were potential trouble makers anyway. Nor was the movement wholly away from the anti-Klan ministers. A great deal of dissatisfaction was expressed by parishioners of the Klan ministers who disliked the hullabaloo of Klan visitations and were hostile to the secrecy and to the extra-legal methods of the Order. Withdrawals of such parishioners often equalled the gains previously mentioned.

The Klan, whose ideals included the unity of all Protestants for the defense of church and state, became a divisive force of no small importance. Fortunately it did not array denomination against denomination. The heads of synods, presbyteries, conferences, (or corresponding bodies) in the state maintained an official silence regarding the Order. Personally, many of these church officials advised their pastors to ignore the Klan if possible. In a survey, made by the writer, of representative ministers of three leading denominations in the state, the testimony was almost universal that no official action was taken either by the district conferences of their denominations or by ministerial associations in the various cities and communities where they served.\* There was, however, a growing belief among a majority of the ministers that the Klan was a disturbing force which they hoped might quickly disappear. While some ministers were Klan members and

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\*Interesting in this connection is the fact that some church publications avoided discussion of the Klan in their columns. The Presbyterian Banner, for instance, during the years 1921-1925, made no mention of the Klan except in one news item regarding the attempt of the Klan to have white officials chosen for the Soldiers Hospital at Tuskegee. The Methodist Review during the years 1924-25 when the Klan was at its height, carried only one article which might be inferred as bearing on the Klan. It was a literary review entitled "Browning's Condemnation of Roman Catholicism."

believed that it served a good purpose, many more thought that it represented a travesty both of Americanism and of Protestantism.

Although the Klan did not cause noticeable tightening of denominational lines as between the Protestants, its divisive character was frequently evidenced within the parishes themselves. One reason for the division of opinion has been suggested above. Klansmen were often disappointed with the cold reception they received from the ministers and church officials. It was irritating to be disowned by the institutions in whose defense they had spent time and money. The anti-Klan Protestants, on the other hand, had grown antagonistic to the Order for three main reasons: it was secret, it had used the churches to gain cheap publicity for itself, and its opposition to those of other races and religious faiths was lacking in discrimination. There were quite a few instances where the antagonism between the pro-Klan and anti-Klan factions within a parish reached a critical stage which seriously imperiled the work of the church, at least temporarily. The Methodist Protestant Church in Connellsville, the Baptist Church in Charleroi, the United Brethren Church in Latrobe, the Christian Church in Scottdale, the United Brethren Church in Hanover, the Presbyterian churches in Crafton and Carnegie are typical cases. Dr. David M. Lyle, of Johnstown, reported another instance; Dr. William R. Craig, of Philadelphia, reported two more; Rev. J. E. A. Bucke, of Sunbury, reported one; Rev. I. B. Littleton reported that most of the churches with which he was familiar in Cambria and Bedford counties had some friction over the Klan although in most cases it was not serious. Certain types of trouble arose more frequently and are illustrated by the following specific cases.

*Case one.* The telephone in Dr. Michael McDivitt's office rang one morning. The Doctor, who was the pastor of an influential Presbyterian Church in South Hills district, Pittsburgh, answered. The person calling spoke of the Ku Klux Klan and its growth in Pittsburgh and wondered if Dr. McDivitt was interested. He also mentioned an open meeting of the Order in the Strand Theatre soon to be held. "We would be glad to have you take a part on the program of that meeting if you could arrange to be present."



"Who is it speaking?" asked Doctor McDivitt. The caller replied that he was not in a position to give his name but that he was an official—an Exalted Cyclops—of a local Klavern. Doctor McDivitt told him that he could not possibly attend this Klan meeting, having a previous engagement.

Then followed a request from the official that Dr. McDivitt read an announcement of the meeting from his pulpit the following Sunday morning. This was also declined.

A little piqued, the Klan official said, "You don't know who you are talking to, do you?" The Doctor admitted his ignorance and stated that he thought it unfair for the official to continue the conversation if he withheld his own name.

"I am a member of your church," the official disclosed and then stated that the Knoxville church was an important one, that it had a wide influence and announced, "We are coming over to church some Sunday as a body." Dr. McDivitt replied that he would be glad to welcome them if they came without their regalia, as regular worshipers.

"We have in mind to make a substantial donation to the relief fund of the church," parried the official in the hope that such a prospect might make some difference in his pastor's attitude. "I have nothing to say against that," replied the Doctor. "If you care to make such a donation we will be glad to accept it but I cannot give my consent to your coming in regalia."

"Suppose, then, that we just drop in sometime, without invitation," suggested the Exalted Cyclops. When Dr. McDivitt protested against this, the official began to speak threateningly. Dr. McDivitt listened for a while and then replied, "I am not afraid of what your organization or any secret society can do to me or to the Church of Christ. Christ's Church is always out in the open and isn't ashamed of what it does or says and unless you are willing to reveal your name, our conversation must stop."

The telephone receivers were hung up but the minister, in spite of his bold assertion, was disturbed. He did not know how many Klansmen belonged to his congregation or how serious a division might arise from his attitude. Not until the Session of his church unanimously upheld his action did he cease to worry. Fortunately the Klan group in his church were not numerous enough to warrant any further action by the Order.<sup>18</sup>

*Case two.* Not many blocks away from Dr. McDivitt's church was the Knox Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church. There were among its members quite a group of Klansmen

when Clyde Nevins, its new pastor, came. A brilliant young man and more liberal in his views than his Klansmen parishioners, he refused all their invitations and solicitations to join the Order. In fact on several occasions he publically expressed his disapproval of its methods. His Klansmen parishioners, thus rebuffed, retaliated in kind. They became actively hostile to their minister and came to his services in robes and hoods more as a warning than as a sign of approval of the work of the church. Rev. Nevins found his efforts to lead his church so thwarted that his Bishop was finally obliged to remove him to another charge.

Meanwhile the anti-Klan parishioners were chagrined to find their services disturbed by robed Klansmen. One of the leading members of the congregation came to Dr. McDivitt furious in his resentment about a Klan visitation that had just taken place, and asked if he might transfer with his family to Dr. McDivitt's church. With difficulty Dr. McDivitt persuaded him to remain in the church where he was already influential and aid in preventing the disintegration which was rapidly taking place.<sup>19</sup>

*Case three.* It was Easter Sunday, 1923, in Bellevue, one of the better residential centers not far from Pittsburgh which overlook the Ohio River from the bluff on its northern bank. Dr. R. B. Urmy was in his pulpit at the Methodist Episcopal Church and the service was well under way. Just as the collection was being taken, the auditorium doors opened and a group of Klansmen in full regalia entered. They separated into three groups and started down the aisles toward the pulpit. As six of them approached Attorney Elmer Kidney, a trustee of the church who was assisting with the collection of the offering, blocked their way and sharply ordered them to "get out and be quick about it." Dr. Urmy, too, rose and said, "Gentlemen, you are disturbing the services here, which is a violation of the law. You will be perfectly welcome to remain if you remove your disguises. Otherwise you must go."

At this double rebuff the Klansmen hesitated and finally retreated toward the door. Attorney Kidney followed them with mounting indignation at their affrontery in thus breaking unheralded into the service. In the vestibule his six feet and two hundred pounds went into action with the result that he had several hoods and parts of robes as evidence of his prowess and of the hurried departure of the startled Klansmen.

Dr. Urmy continued the Easter service announcing that he would use the Klan as the subject of his sermon the following Sunday evening, at which time he criticized the

Order declaring it to be both un-Christian and un-American. The incident proved to be a tactical defeat of some importance for the Klan. Several of its state officials called on Dr. Urmy the following week, professing the good intentions of their Order. They had only desired to openly demonstrate their support of the work of his church but, in spite of this conciliatory attitude, Dr. Urmy refused to retract any statements he had made in criticism of the Klan. Fortunately the Klan was weak in Bellevue and there was almost no opposition to him from Klansmen within his own congregation.<sup>20</sup>

*Case four.* That all ministers did not fare so well when they took a stand on the Klan issue is shown by the experience of Rev. Fred R. Dent. Graduated from Washington and Jefferson College in 1905 where he did excellent work, he went to Youngstown for his first charge, later coming to Milvale Presbyterian Church. In both places he was acceptably received and the reports of his work were good. While at Milvale he became interested in the Klan and was offered remunerative work with the organization as a lecturer. In this capacity he proved quite effective. He helped to organize the Altoona Klavern which grew to be the largest in the state, having more than 2,000 members. He boasted of having signed up 550 members during one meeting at this place.

For a time he worked as assistant Kleagle on a regular commission and was given charge of propagation in a district of his own. He was finally hired by the Atlanta office and received his checks regularly every two weeks. While this meant a considerable addition to his regular salary as pastor at Milvale, it also demanded that he give at least four nights of the week to the Klan activities. Dr. McDivitt, who had gone to college with him, tried to persuade him to quit the Order. "You may be in pocket now but my prediction is that you will be out of pocket later," he warned. Rev. Dent, however, found more congenial companionship and advice while in the company of Rev. Daugherty and Rev. Dempster who were likewise Klan pastors. Rev. Dempster and he would spend long hours in the Seventh Avenue Hotel where they smoked and talked together.

But when the Klan declined, Rev. Dent declined with it. He had alienated a good portion of his congregation by his neglect of his pastoral duties. When they asked for a change of ministers he was obliged to seek another opening. Doctor Jones of the First Presbyterian Church wrote many letters of recommendation for him; Dr. McDivitt wrote many also. As a capable man and a good preacher, Rev. Dent could be

praised but his affiliation with the Ku Klux Klan turned parish after parish against him. When this writer interviewed him (1933) he was living with a relative, spending his leisure hours digging up the records of his family history and preaching to a little rural church which could not adequately support him and in which he seemed little interested.<sup>21</sup>

By no means all the ministers who lectured for the Klan as a profitable side line suffered the fate of Rev. Dent. The list of those who did suffer severely, however, is long enough. The evidence is convincing that Rev. J. W. Dempster of the Crafton Presbyterian Church who as a Klansman rose high in the councils of the state organization, had so alienated his congregation that he would shortly have been removed from his church in a similar fashion had he not suddenly died of a stroke before the Crafton church had taken action. Not a single case has been reported of a minister whose membership in the Order gained for him the respect of his denominational leaders or materially aided in his professional advancement.

From the fact that division was prevalent within congregations over the Klan issue can easily be inferred the fact that the Klan failed to stimulate progress toward unified action by the Protestant churches or to increase cooperation among them. This was true in spite of the general assumption in Klan literature and by the propagandists of the Order that all denominations were equal in rights and represented one unified body of opinion which could be adequately described by the singular noun Protestantism. The Klan problem itself was considered a local issue, not one for united action by any group of churches.

On the other hand, the Klan definitely hindered the growth of a spirit of cooperation between Protestants and Catholics and their affiliated organizations in certain common enterprises to which the Klan gave its support. There had, of course, never been—except in extremely rare instances—any religious cooperation between the Catholic Church and the various Protestant denominations; no transfer of members by letter, no exchange of pulpits, no union meetings, no visitations by communicants to each other's services with the consent of priests and ministers. The dogmatic differences between Protestantism and Catholicism were great enough to make them unassimilable. Nevertheless,



Catholics occupied seats with Protestants on many charitable and civic bodies and had shared in advancing numerous political and moral reforms. The Klan did not affect much of this cooperation. Since, for example, the Klan was not interested in nor, in the minds of Catholics, associated with welfare work such as Red Cross and community chests, both Catholics and Protestants continued to work together in this type of activity. The Klan movement did result in a definite withdrawal of Catholic cooperation in other lines of work. In politics it has already been noted how religious affiliations became more important than economic or social issues, often dividing the population sharply into Catholic and Protestant groups. In the educational field the growth of the Klan resulted in a decrease in the cooperation which Catholics gave to the public school system.

It likewise affected the Prohibition movement in which Catholics and Protestants had both been interested. Sponsored by organized religion because of its moral aspects, the campaign for prohibition was by no means simply a Protestant movement. The Catholic Church had built up a flourishing temperance organization and work was being done in many parishes especially among the young people. Rev. J. J. Curran, a prominent Pennsylvania Catholic, was one of those who had not only strongly supported the temperance movement within his own Church but, as vice-president of the Anti-Saloon League for twenty-five years, had actively supported its activities. In view of the fact that the majority of the Catholics in many parishes were families of immigrants and that standards accepted for generations had to be broken down before new ideals of temperance and sobriety were acceptable, the task of Catholic prohibition workers was as difficult as it was important.

Describing some of the work they had done, Michael Williams, editor of *Commonweal*, lists, among other things, the following: "Thousands of reprints of an article by United States Senator Ransdell of Louisiana, a Catholic who favored prohibition, were circulated, together with a pamphlet entitled, *The Catholic Clergy and the Solution*, containing quotations from popes, archbishops, bishops, and priests. Some of these statements were simply strong pleas for temperance or total abstinence, both of which movements have always been supported strongly by the Catholic

Church; while others again were outright endorsements of prohibition."<sup>22</sup>

It was a movement which should have had the encouragement of all dry Klansmen but the stereotyped view of Catholics held by Klansmen blinded them to its very existence. Their mental association of the words "rum and Romanism" had been too firmly established. It is, of course, true that the Catholic Church had not made abstinence from intoxicants a prerequisite for salvation in the way that certain Calvinistic groups made it a sign of membership among the "elect." Klansmen, however, failed to recognize that the Catholic Church did consider intemperance a social evil and had encouraged its eradication. Catholics were often condemned wholesale as opposed to prohibition and as violators of the Constitution, in contrast to which Klansmen boasted of the "pure Americanism" shown by their own support of the Eighteenth Amendment.

It was inevitable that some of the violent dislike which Catholics had for the Klan would be transferred to the Klan's official prohibition attitude with a resultant relaxation in their support of the temperance movement. Such was actually the case. Prohibition workers among the Catholics found their task doubly hard and in many places abandoned it altogether.

### References

1. Klan propaganda Leaflet. Form C-100.
2. The Kloran (Klan White Book) Ku Klux Klan Press, p. 2.
3. Ibid p. 14.
4. Ibid p. 16.
5. Ibid p. 19.
6. Ibid p. 40.
7. Ibid p. 42.
8. Proceedings of the Second Imperial Klonsvokation. p. 55.
9. Ibid p. 9-15.
10. M. A. King, E. C., of Lincoln Klavern.
11. While pastor of the Christian Church at Scottsdale, Rev. P. S. Wight was an enthusiastic Klansman, singing, lecturing, writing songs, selling booklets and records for the Order. His church forced his withdrawal. He subsequently went to Buffalo, N. Y., there establishing "The International Music Company." The Klansman's Jubilee Song is taken from a song booklet published by this company entitled, "American Hymns."
12. Told the writer by Mrs. William Cantev who, as a Klan official, was familiar with both the men's and women's organizations in the southeastern part of the state.
13. Rev. W. A. Graham, then pastor of the M. E. Church at Patton.
14. Testimony of Mr. M. A. King, E. C. of Lincoln Klavern.
15. Testimony of Rev. J. F. Stayer, E. C. of Westmoreland County Klan.
16. Testimony of J. A. Kelley, Scottsdale Klan No. 32.
17. "The Klan: Protestantism's Ally," Kourier Magazine, Aug. 1925.
18. Personal interview with Dr. McDivitt.
19. Personal interview with Dr. McDivitt.
20. Personal interview with Dr. Urmey. Cf. Lit. Dig. 77/37 May 5, 1923.
21. Personal interview with Rev. F. R. Dent.
22. Michael Williams: "The Shadow of the Pope" (N. Y. 1932) p. 205.

## CHAPTER 9

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### THE KLAN AND THE SCHOOLS

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The "school question" which had been the most important issue in the nativist agitation of the 1840's and had been prominent in both the Know Nothing and the A.P.A. movements, was by no means overlooked when the Klan carried the banner of nativism in the 1920's. As in the earlier agitation, so in this last instance, the controversy was one phase of nativist opposition to the Catholic Church. One must be careful, however, not to be misled by Klan trumpetings against "the enemies of our public schools" and assume that Catholics who maintained their own parochial schools opposed free public education. The question was not whether there should be free schools maintained by public taxation. Catholics answered that query with as full-voiced an affirmative as did Protestant Klansmen. The dispute lay in the control of the education given in the free schools.

The issue was often expressed as involving the abandonment or the preservation of the "American" principle of separation of church and state. Actually, of course, there was never a time in American history when this separation had been complete. It will be remembered, for instance, that while the maintenance of an established church by the Federal Government was prohibited by the Bill of Rights, its authors really expected the states to encourage Christianity. Some of them did continue to maintain established churches for many years and church property is still free from taxation in many of them. Applied to the public schools, separation of church and state would not be complete unless all religious instruction was eliminated. Protestant Klansmen out to put the Bible into the schools were as hostile to that as were devout Catholics. Warning against the materialistic emphasis in education and pointing to the fate of Rome, the author of an official Klan pamphlet wrote: "The im-

portant question, the thing that most concerns us is, Are our children developing Christian character?"<sup>1</sup> Obviously, Klansmen were not campaigning for "godless" schools in which religious instruction was taboo.

If, then, Klansmen were unwilling to carry out the logical implication of the principle of separation, several other alternatives were possible. Briefly outlined these were:

1. Parochialism, i.e., separate denominational schools.
  - (a) in which public funds would be distributed to various denominational schools in some such manner as in England and Holland, the State demanding the maintenance of a certain standard of secular instruction in these schools; or
  - (b) in which the public schools were opened for the use of Catholics and other religious groups after regular school hours for purposes of religious instruction, e.g., the Faribault plan.
2. The "common school" which all children, regardless of religious affiliation, must attend,
  - (a) in which the religious instruction given was reduced to include only that common to all religious groups; or
  - (b) in which the majority of voters who controlled the school could introduce whatever religious instruction they might desire regardless of dissenting groups.

Catholics had consistently favored the alternative of parochialism on the principle that "since education in the proper sense of the word is essentially a spiritual function, the control of education of (Catholic) children rests ultimately with the Church. This does not mean that the state had not the right to establish schools. But there is a great difference between establishing schools and educating, between erecting buildings, paying salaries and even compelling children to attend school and the actual work of education."<sup>2</sup> There is no doubt that J. A. Burns, President of Holy Cross College, in writing the statement just quoted, expressed the official Catholic attitude. Dr. Brownson, one of the most respected Catholic scholars of America, stated the point of view of his Church as clearly as anyone when he wrote:

"All education, as all life, should be religious, and all education divorced from religion is an evil and not a good . . . We deny the competency of the state to educate even for



its own order, its right to establish purely secular schools from which all religion is excluded; . . . but we do not deny, we assert, rather, its right to establish public schools under the internal control and management of the spiritual society, and to exact that a certain amount of secular instruction be given along with the religious education that society gives."<sup>3</sup>

Against this alternative of parochialism and especially against the assertion of the Catholic Church that education was "essentially a function of the spiritual society,"<sup>4</sup> the Klan was vigorously opposed. This claim of "the hierarchy," Klansmen asserted, was motivated by its desire "to facilitate the spread and acceptance of its own sovereignty in every country affected, and finally throughout the world."<sup>5</sup> Klan hostility to parochialism, therefore, was apparently based upon a more fundamental issue than the use of public funds for private Catholic schools, however much Klansmen talked about the principle of the separation of church and state. Even if the private maintenance of Catholic schools had been taken for granted and the question of securing public funds had never been raised, Klansmen would have continued to oppose them because they felt that the "subversive" doctrine of the sovereignty and authority of the Catholic clergy was being inculcated in the minds of students who attended them. The high praise and eager support given to the unconstitutional Oregon school law requiring all children to attend public schools is proof of this Klan attitude.

Not that the Klan opposed all parochial schools in Pennsylvania. No warning crosses were burned before private schools controlled by Protestant groups nor were their officials subjected to public criticism. The term "parochial" was synonymous with "Catholic" in Klan usage and it was as an alternative to Catholic schools that Klansmen advocated a single common (to all) public school system.

Although it is doubtful whether Klansmen were really interested in "American Principles" except as they could be made to safeguard nativist control, they were vigorous in asserting them. One of these principles which they discovered to be admirably suited to their school policy was that of "democratic control." It was "American," they believed, to have education placed in

the hands—theoretically, at least—of popular majorities rather than in those of an ecclesiastical officialdom either Catholic or Protestant. In areas like Oregon where popular majorities were definitely Protestant this principle did work quite satisfactorily.

In using principle to support privilege the Klan was following a practice by no means rare in human history. Apostolic succession, justification by faith and divine right of kings had similarly served the interests of popes, protesters and monarchs. One need but mention such principles as legitimacy, laissez-faire, sound money, national self-determination, and security to be reminded that "principle" as well as "patriotism" has proved a refuge for privileged groups, if not for scoundrels.

Generally, however, privilege-seekers have had difficulty with principles. Finding them unequally useful in all situations, they have often been obliged to hedge and have opened themselves to the charge of hypocrisy. Business men have frequently suffered embarrassment in this regard. When threatened with social legislation in behalf of their employees or the consuming public they have stoutly defended the principle that government should keep its hands out of business. Nevertheless they have held it to be perfectly legitimate for the government to enact protective tariffs and other regulatory legislation favorable to their interests. Similarly, Pennsylvania Klansmen who were interested in the supremacy of native Protestants and who consequently praised the principle of popular control of education in Oregon and other Protestant areas, found it undesirable to be consistent when Catholic districts voted control of the schools into the hands of Catholic directors. Some Klansmen, faced with the above dilemma, merely turned from the principle of popular control to that of separation of church and state, claiming that the latter applied in areas where Catholics were in the majority.

That some Klansmen were aware of another way out is shown by a few instances where they supported consolidation of school districts. In certain areas of Western Pennsylvania, Catholics were largely segregated in the mining villages and in sections of the mill towns. Consolidation often meant the joining of these Catholic islands with the heavily Protestant rural areas with the result that Protestant control was increased. The instances where the Klan supported consolidation were practically all of this nature

and there were a few cases where the local Klans opposed consolidation because the resulting situation would have been reversed.<sup>6</sup> Thus Klansmen found in the manipulation of school districts a way to save the principle of popular control without the sacrifice of Protestant control.

It was this same desire to preserve both principle and privilege which prompted the Klan to commit itself officially to the support of a Federal Department of Education with a cabinet secretary at its head and with wide supervisory powers over the nation's schools.\*

The widely circulated Klan pamphlet, *The Public School Problem in America*, in which Imperial Wizard Evans advocated this proposal, reveals the reasons prompting his action. While he was not unaware that "national aid" to America's public schools might mean a heavier subsidy for education in the impoverished sections of the South and thus please southern Klansmen, the most obvious consideration that made him advocate centralized educational control was the fact that Catholics were opposed to it. "The hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church," he wrote, "stands against America on this issue." He asserted that the Church was hostile because such a Department would eventually mean the closing of more than six thousand Catholic parochial elementary schools. Whether or not he exaggerated Catholic fear of increased federal control, it is clear that his support for it was largely based upon an analysis of the situation which can be summarized as follows: A growing Catholic population in certain sections of the United States threatened to place the control of the public schools of these areas in Catholic hands. The country as a whole, however, was still Protestant and Protestants consequently could still control federal policies. The time had come, therefore, to give the federal government more power over education.

This discussion of principles was confined to those who had to answer for the Order and publicly defend it against hostile criticism. Most Pennsylvania Klansmen did not concern them-

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\*This proposal had been advocated for some years by the National Educational Association and had the support of such other groups as the American Federation of Labor, the General Federation of Women's Clubs and the League of Women Voters. It was put before Congress in the form of the Stirling-Towner Bill (later the Stirling-Reed Bill). The Klan supported these measures in its publications.

selves with underlying principles or worry about possible inconsistencies. They were satisfied to know that the public schools which they and their parents before them had attended were considered "the Hope of the Nation and the Palladium of our Liberties"<sup>7</sup> and that Catholics, where they possessed sufficient wealth, usually maintained separate schools of their own.

A survey of the educational activities of the Klan in Pennsylvania shows that a public school was accepted by Klansmen as genuinely "American" if it met but four requirements. These requirements eloquently reveal the fact that Klansmen generally in Pennsylvania were recruited from the class of men who, while narrowly dogmatic with regard to certain externals, were easily satisfied if these were present. These criteria were (1) regular Bible reading as prescribed by law but made from an accepted Protestant edition of the scripture, (2) the prominent display of the American flag, (3) the absence of Catholics from the teaching staff, and (4) the absence of any recognized symbols of Catholic or foreign origin in the equipment or activities of the school. It is safe to say that few local Klans were disturbed about the public schools where these requirements were met. The existence of short, eight-months school terms did not trouble them; inadequacies of curricula or of plant did not stimulate protesting Klan delegations to visit boards of directors; no crosses were burned or pressure put upon school officials in behalf of increased school budgets, more adequate teacher preparation, or the establishment of kindergartens and evening classes for adults. Of course there were cases where local Klans actually supported constructive educational programs. In Greensburg, for example, the Klan supported a bond issue for the erection of a new High School building which might otherwise have been defeated, but in this instance as in the cases previously cited where local branches of the Order supported consolidation, the initiative was not taken by the Klans. School authorities or other organizations took the lead and the Klan merely cooperated.

The Order did take the initiative, however, in seeing that their four criteria of "American" public schools were maintained. In regard to daily Bible reading, specific cases of Klan action to enforce this requirement came to the attention of the county superintendents of education in only ten of the twenty-two coun-



ties surveyed but not all cases of this kind reached the ear of the county officials. There were a few instances where Protestant teachers were warned of laxness in this matter. Most of the cases, however, involved Catholic teachers, all of whom were suspected by Klansmen of un-American practices and were consequently watched. Protestant children in their class-rooms were used as informers and Klansmen were usually glad to find irregular practices which confirmed their suspicions and which made good propaganda for the teacher's dismissal.

Since the Pennsylvania School Code required the reading of at least ten verses of scripture daily without comment, laxness in this regard was seized upon as a subject for protest to the local school authorities and as ground upon which to base a demand, if not for the teacher's immediate dismissal, at least for his meticulous observance of the law during the remainder of the school term and for his replacement the following year.

While there was nothing in the law requiring the use of any specific translation of the Scripture, Klansmen had a decided prejudice against the "Catholic Bible." While most Klansmen had never seen a copy of the commonly used Rheims-Douay translation, and could not mention specific differences between it and the accepted Protestant versions, still they thought it "subversive" and "sectarian." Indeed, most Protestants shared this opinion and one of the quickest ways to turn the average Protestant community against a Catholic teacher and make his reelection impossible was to have the report spread that he was using "the Catholic Bible" in his school-room.

A typical instance of Klan activity in connection with Bible reading happened in Donegal Township, Westmoreland County.<sup>8</sup> In one of the rural schools of that township the teacher was known to be a Catholic. The Klansmen decided to investigate. Several students whom they had selected as watchers reported that what they supposed to be the scripture reading was read from a book that wasn't the Bible and that the teacher always put the book she used in her desk where none of the students could see it. Klansmen immediately spread the news and visited the school board. Several school directors favored immediate dismissal. It was decided to ask the advice of the county school officials in Greensburg. The assistant superintendent to whom

the matter was referred, when he inquired about the proof available to substantiate the charge, found that there was none except the statements of the school children. The local Klan promised to secure an investigating committee and sent to East Huntingdon Township for several Klansmen who were not known in Donegal. These visiting Klansmen and the assistant county superintendent paid an unannounced visit to the school-room of the teacher in question and listened to the opening exercise. True to the report, the book from which she read had colored board covers and in appearance was quite unlike the usual family Bible. The scripture passage read sounded authentic, however. In order not to make the object of their visit too obvious, the men remained during several class recitations. Meanwhile one of them casually asked to see the book from which the morning scripture had been read. To the amusement of the county official and somewhat to the dismay of the Klansmen, it was found to be a little book of *Bible Readings for Schools* edited by a former (Protestant) State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nathan C. Schaeffer. The fact that their concern proved unwarranted and the reported violation of the school law proved untrue did not embarrass the Donegal Klansmen. They achieved their purpose anyway for enough sentiment had been created in the township against the teacher that her re-election became inadvisable.

If Protestants regarded the "Catholic Bible" as inaccurate and sectarian, it is equally true that Catholics were taught to consider the usual Protestant translations textually erroneous and unsafe. While most Catholic teachers in Protestant districts were careful not to disturb their patrons by using the translation sanctioned by the Catholic Church, others preferred to do so even though a risk was involved. Two teachers employed in Collier Township, Allegheny County, illustrate the latter group. The school-room of one of these teachers was used as a voting place on election days. It was on such a day in 1924 that a Rheims-Douay edition of the Bible was discovered in the desk of this teacher. News of this discovery spread rapidly and the local Klan sent a committee to the school directors to make a strong protest. Sentiment against both Catholic teachers became so hostile that the directors knew it would mean their sub-

sequent defeat if they voted to re-employ them. Although guilty of no legal offense and rated among the best teachers of Allegheny County, they had no alternative except to seek employment in a district where Catholics were given an equal chance with Protestants for positions. But three such districts existed in Allegheny County outside the city of Pittsburgh when the Klan was at its height.<sup>9</sup>

School officials reported other instances varying but slightly from this in Adams, Armstrong, Centre, Chester, Clarion, Clinton, Dauphin, Juniata and Pike Counties. Although the total number of cases reported was not large, in a majority of the instances the services of the teachers involved were terminated at the close of the school term. In many local districts of the state there were no Catholic teachers employed and Klansmen in these districts were denied the privilege of defending American school children from "the servants of the Pope." As a substitute for that more exciting activity, perhaps, Klansmen presented Bibles to a few schools. The Women of the Ku Klux Klan, however, were more generous than the men's Order in this particular.

While the insistence of Klansmen upon daily Bible reading was not without point as a means to preserve the Protestant tradition of the open Bible, still it is doubtful if many school children regarded it as such or were affected in their religious attitudes by this practice in the way Klansmen supposed. Many other things in the school program had a greater effect upon the spiritual development of the children than routine Bible reading. Klansmen gave little evidence, however, that they were aware of this and were seldom disturbed unless this all too superficial practice was omitted.

In addition to their requirement of Bible reading they demanded the presence of the country's flag in the "American" public school and usually took pains to see that it was prominently displayed. Here again Klansmen revealed their mental age by confining their attention largely to externals. Believing as did everyone else that the public schools should teach patriotism, they contented themselves by emphasizing the external rituals of flag raising and saluting and the practice of repeating the oath of allegiance. Most Klansmen distinguished not at all between

the symbols and the substance of patriotism or at least gave little outward evidence of such discrimination. They suspected anyone who questioned the great importance which they placed upon this ritualism in the making of patriots and thought of patriotism as the acceptance of such shibboleths as "love of liberty" and "loyalty to the past" and to "the Constitution." The Americanism of any who critically evaluated the nation's culture and policies and were discriminating in their praise of American tradition was suspected. Klansmen failed to recognize that people of widely varying ideas of what was good for the nation might all be sincerely loyal citizens and denied the patriotism of all whose ideas differed substantially from their own mental stereotypes.

In their demand for the display of the American flag in the public schools the local Klans met with no opposition and had to get what satisfaction they could by donating flags to selected schools. One Exalted Cyclops<sup>10</sup> in the Cumberland Valley boasted that his organization had set aside ten per cent of its income as a fund with which to purchase flags and an occasional Bible. When new buildings were being dedicated, Klansmen usually tried to get a place on the dedicatory program by offering to donate an American flag. There were many cases where this was done, often with appropriate remarks about one hundred per cent Americanism, and always with the hope that the students over whom it would wave might remember the Order which made the presentation.

Rarely was there as much emotional excitement connected with these flag raisings as with activities which aroused opposition although Klansmen were considerably stirred in Adams and surrounding counties over the refusal of one teacher who was opposed to the Order to use a flag which had been donated by the local Klan.<sup>11</sup> Another exception to these usually uneventful ceremonies occurred in Slocum Township, Luzerne County, where a near riot was precipitated when anti-Klan elements resisted the participation of robed Klansmen in a school dedication.<sup>12</sup> Of the thirteen counties in which Klan flag donations were reported by school officials,<sup>13</sup> Washington County had the largest number. Chester County had but one such event. The practice itself, while



resulting in some publicity for the Order, lacked sufficient thrill to be popular. Moreover, presentable flags were expensive.

Another external criterion of an authentic American public school as defined by the Klan was the absence of Catholics upon its teaching staff. This opposition of Klansmen to Catholic teachers was apparently due less to religious than to patriotic considerations. Teachers who accepted the claims of an ecclesiastical hierarchy which, according to Klansmen, asserted the right "to think for mankind" and to turn people into "puppets instead of independent and self-governing minds"<sup>14</sup> were held to be poor defenders of democratic government, poor guardians of American liberties. Klansmen admitted that not all Catholic teachers were teaching "dangerous and subversive doctrines." When questioned by the writer regarding specific Catholic teachers in their own communities Klansmen usually had no proof that anything undesirable was being taught. On the other hand, they asked, Why take the risk? The allegiance which faithful Catholics gave to their Church made them potentially dangerous. The complaint of these Klansmen was not that Catholics obeyed the voice of God rather than the command of the State when the two were in conflict. Protestants, too, had never been slow to violate civil laws that were in conflict with conscience. Indeed, Protestantism had survived largely by violation of early laws which required religious uniformity and which placed heavy penalties upon dissenters. Witness also the Protestant abolitionists who violated the fugitive slave laws which they considered iniquitous. The danger was not in obedience to God rather than to man. It lay in the fact that pronouncements which Klansmen were sure had originated in Rome were believed by Catholics to have originated in Heaven.

This difference was basic and insurmountable. The doctrine of an authoritative Church or teaching hierarchy headed by the Pope, established by God to transmit inerrant truth lay at the heart of Catholicism and was rejected completely by most of the Protestant sects which, even if holding to the doctrine of an inerrant Bible, were necessarily obliged to fall back upon the consensus of opinion of their communicants for its interpretation. So fundamental was this difference in its effect not only upon church organization but, by inference, upon people's attitudes

toward all democratic institutions that Catholics had found it virtually impossible to secure teaching positions in strongly Protestant communities even before the Klan was organized. In Juniata County, for instance, there had been but two Catholic teachers prior to the Klan. In York County there had seldom been more than six; in Franklin County, rarely more than eight; in Dauphin County, rarely more than three and in Cumberland County seldom even that many.

When Catholic teachers with high professional ratings were dismissed because of Klan hostility to their religious affiliation as in the Collier Township instance mentioned above, school officials often tried to locate them in other less hostile districts. The result was that in a large part of the state the percentage of Catholic teachers employed did not vary appreciably from 1921 to 1932.<sup>15</sup> This was true even in Allegheny County with its numerous Klans and mixed Catholic-Protestant population. The same was true in Carbon County in spite of its mining villages with Catholic populations. In Mifflin County there was no variation nor was there in Clarion, Washington and Bedford Counties. In York County Catholic teachers remained five in number during most of the period. Berks County is typical of a group of counties in which Catholic teachers varied by two or three from year to year but this had been characteristic of these counties long before the Klan had come into them. In Westmoreland County, while the number of Catholic teachers hired during the period of Klan ascendancy was substantially smaller, by 1932 the percentage was practically the same as it had been in 1921. Although this survey of the counties is not complete, it is a sufficiently wide sampling to show that while the Klan undoubtedly did have a temporary effect in tightening the religious lines on the question of employing Catholic public school teachers and in changing somewhat the distribution of Catholic teachers, it altered very little the number employed within the state as a whole.

As a final safeguard of the public schools Klansmen insisted that there be no symbols of popery or "alienism" flouted before American school children. Belonging to an "invisible empire" with secret signs and passwords and exposed to a propaganda which surrounded them with un-American influences, the more

excitable Klansmen can be understood if not excused when they imagined that they saw many evidences of the secret plotting of their opponents and struck more or less blindly at them. Illustrative of their nervous suspicion was their excitement over the engraving resembling a cross on one corner of an issue of United States currency which became to them *prima facie* evidence that the Pope was influential in the national government. The hasty inference that the editors of the *Literary Digest* were Catholics because they had repeated "the wild-eyed charges" of Klan guilt in the Mer Rouge murders of 1923 and gave no prominence to the later grand jury exoneration is another instance. Quite similar was the opposition of the Uniontown Klan to the use of a textbook in the schools of that place because it contained a design which they believed was symbolic of the supremacy of the Roman Church. In New Kensington a protest was lodged by the local Klan against the use of *An American History* by D. S. Muzzey on the allegation that Professor Muzzey had called Washington a rebel. A few other histories suffered Klan criticism because their authors had given aid or comfort to Catholics and foreigners.<sup>16</sup> Of the instances reported, there were less than four per cent where the criticism resulted in a change of textbook although in Uniontown Superintendent of Schools Proctor was obliged to withdraw because, in part, he had opposed the Klan in this matter.

One of the most humorous instances of this type of Klan activity occurred in Greensburg. In the high school building was hung a large reproduction of the Doge, the well-known portrait by Bellini. To Klansmen familiar with occasional pictures of Pius XI in the rotogravure sections of the Sunday newspaper, the Doge, garbed in the flowing robes of an Italian prince of the fifteenth century, looked suspiciously like a Catholic churchman. The rumor spread that it was a picture of one of the Popes and that Catholics were secretly exulting in that fact. The local Klan took action and notified school officials of their disapproval of the portrait and asked that it be removed. Assured that they were mistaken about the identity of the painting, they were still suspicious. Work of art or no work of art, pope or no pope they asked that it come down. The High School principal obliged them and the portrait was finally taken to the office of

the Superintendent of Schools where fewer people would look upon it as a subtle means of influencing young people to honor the Roman Church.<sup>17</sup>

The chief educational result of the Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania was its effect not upon the public schools and their students but upon the Klansmen themselves. The minds of these men were focused for a considerable period upon the old nativist subjects, particularly upon the threat of Rome. The old charges were all repeated, the old fears again revived increasing in conviction with every repetition. Not only was the cumulative effect of the rehearsal of the private fears of individual Klansmen upon the group as a whole productive of this result but the encouragement given by the national officials considerably enhanced it.

The Imperial office maintained a national lecture bureau beginning in March of 1924 which in five months had provided speakers who gave a total of 197,764 addresses to men and 21,255 to women and mixed audiences,<sup>18</sup> of which Pennsylvania received its share. After 1924 this lecture bureau was absorbed in a National Department of Education and Publicity which not only continued to maintain speakers in the state but edited the official Klan periodicals and prepared lectures to be read in the local Klaverns. It had an ambitious program of activities but it proved so expensive that it was soon curtailed. Only one series of lectures, nine in number, on "The Fundamentals of Citizenship"<sup>19</sup> was written and either they had a very narrow distribution in Pennsylvania or the memory of Klansmen is poor for few had even heard of them. An official periodical was published for distribution in the state called *The Keystone American* but in spite of official insistence,<sup>20</sup> so few Klansmen subscribed that it was soon discontinued. Attention was then centered upon the publication of the national monthly *Kourier Magazine* which was enlarged to include news items from each of the realms in the empire. It continued to be published during the entire period from the time of its establishment to the present (1936). While it was more conservatively edited than the radical *Fellowship Forum* to which many Pennsylvania Klansmen had subscribed, nevertheless the type of material it printed undoubtedly magnified the differences between Protestants and Catholics, natives and foreign-born and made it more difficult to secure that practical



working compromise which was necessary as long as they lived together. Seeds were generously sown for another outburst of nativist activity if circumstances ever again became propitious.

### *References*

1. "The Obligation of American Citizens to Free Public Schools." Title Page containing "With the compliments of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan." No Date; p. 3.
2. Quoted in Garrison's: "Catholicism and the American Mind." (Chicago, 1928) p. 137.
3. Brownson, O. A.: "Brownson's Views" p. 64.
4. Burns, J. H.: "Growth and Development of the Catholic School System in the United States" (N. Y. 1917) p. 222.
5. Evans, H. W.: "The Public School Problem in America." No date.
6. Instances where the Klan favored consolidation in Washington County were reported by S. V. Kimberland; in Clarion County, by N. E. Heeter; Superintendent G. C. Brosius reported that the Klan opposed consolidation in sections of Clinton County.
7. "The Church of Rome in American Politics." Small Klan folder, undated.
8. Two members of the committee who visited the school reported the incident to the writer.
9. Ass't Supt. S. H. Replogle, of Allegheny County, who reported this incident said that the Klan did little more than intensify the anti-Catholic feeling which had long existed in large areas of that county.
10. Mr. Klapper, for several years Exalted Cyclops of Shippensburg Klan.
11. The school referred to is Ortana, located near Gettysburg. Mr. Klapper is the authority for the incident.
12. Reported by Dr. Lee Driver, Director of School Consolidation of the State Department of Public Instruction.
13. Armstrong, Adams, Allegheny, Bedford, Berks, Cameron, Chester, Clarion, Dauphin, Juniata, Lackawanna, Luzerne and Washington Counties.
14. "The Obligation of American Citizens to Free Public Schools" pp. 14, 15.
15. This information was secured by means of a questionnaire filled in by the County Superintendents of Education or their assistants in each of the counties named.
16. These history texts were:  
Hall, J.: Our Ancestors in Europe.  
McLaughlin & VanTyne: A History of the United States for Schools.  
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18. Proceedings of the Second Imperial Klonyokation, pp. 208-209.
19. The "Kourier Magazine," December, 1924, p. 9.
20. Minutes of the State Klorero, Dec. 6, 1924, p. 8.

## CHAPTER 10

### THE WOMEN OF THE KU KLUX KLAN

As the success of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan made it apparent that the time was ripe for a new nativist movement, it was almost inevitable that an attempt would be made to organize the "ladies" as well as the "knights." Indeed, at the first Imperial Klonsvocation in November of 1922, the "Knights" raised and discussed the question of sponsoring an official women's order. Evidence was presented that haste would be required if serious competition was to be avoided for already numerous efforts were being made to get such an organization under way.

It would have been easier to have recognized one of these established groups but, feeling that some prestige might be lost from the fact that the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan had not been its originator, it was decided not to "recognize, aid or assist" any existing women's nativist society. Instead, a committee was appointed to investigate the possibility of fostering a new order which would combine as many of the others as possible but which Klansmen could claim to have been instituted and officially endorsed by their own Order.

The committee thus established asked the existing women's groups to send representatives to a conference in Washington in June, 1923 to consider the advisability of combining their efforts in such a new Klan-sponsored order. Some of them came and after balancing older loyalties against the practical advantage of having the active aid of a large and growing men's organization, it was voted to prepare a petition asking the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan for the right to use its name and as much of its constitution and ritual as they might wish in the formation of a new women's order. The Imperial Klonscillum of the Klan, conveniently meeting at the same time and place, granted the petition and promised the hearty cooperation and support of the men's Order.

Chartered shortly thereafter in the state of Arkansas under the name of "Women of the Ku Klux Klan," the Order adopted with

minor modifications the constitution of the men's Order as well as a ritual practically identical with that of their sponsor. Mrs. Lulu A. Markwell became the chief executive officer with the title of Imperial Commander.

Organizers were immediately put in the field on the same commission basis as were the men's Kleagles. The initial donation was five dollars—only half that collected from the men. Four dollars was kept in the State and was divided between the Kleagle in charge and her subordinates. The remaining dollar of each donation was sent to maintain the national headquarters at Little Rock, Arkansas. Beginning without funds, the Women of the Ku Klux Klan enjoyed for some time a subsidy from the men's Order to meet the expenses of propagation. It was not long, however, until the Little Rock headquarters was showing a profit. The first financial statement made public to the men's Order on September 25, 1924, showed cash in bank to the amount of \$136,-767 and an additional \$60,433 in real estate and other tangible property.<sup>1</sup>

Considerable attention was given to the task of getting as many other women's nativist societies as possible to merge themselves in this new organization. The investigating committee set up by the men's Order in 1922 had found over a score of these societies in existence. One of the most important was the women's order which Colonel W. J. Simmons had sponsored. The open hostility which broke out between the Evans and the Simmons factions within the men's order added an extra impetus to Evans and his followers in their effort to absorb the women's organization of their rival, and much money was put into the enterprise.

The women of the Ku Klux Klan experienced a struggle for the control of the national office somewhat similar to that which disturbed the men's organization. Mrs. Markwell, the first Imperial Commander, was annoyed with a growing factionalism among her subordinates—allegedly stimulated by certain imperial officers of the men's Order who wished to have more control over her office.<sup>2</sup> Her duties became so unpleasant that she finally consented to resign. On February 16, 1924, Miss Robbie Gill, who had served under Mrs. Markwell as Secretary of the Order,\*

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\*It will be remembered that H. W. Evans who replaced W. J. Simmons as Imperial Wizard of the Men's Order, had likewise been Secretary of the Order under Colonel Simmons.

was elevated to the office of Commander over the head of Miss Cloud who had been Vice-Commander and who expected to complete the unexpired term of Mrs. Markwell. Miss Cloud challenged Miss Gill's right to the office of Commander and the matter was not settled until it had been taken to the civil court. The outcome was that Miss Gill continued as the chief executive. This was satisfactory to the men's Order for Miss Gill, who was soon to become the wife of J. A. Comer, a prominent member of the Executive Council of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, was more amenable to suggestions of that body than her competitor for the office would have been.

Organizers were first sent into the strongest Klan states immediately after the chartering of the Women's Order. In Pennsylvania, recruiting began in 1924 although it was not until January of the following year that the Order was recognized as an incorporated institution by the State and was granted the legal right to operate as such within the Commonwealth. Mrs. Mary I. Goodwin was made Major Kleagle in charge of organizing the state and established her first headquarters in Pittsburgh. The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan were asked to cooperate. Sam D. Rich, Grand Dragon of the men's order and A. L. Cotton, one of his chief recruiting officers, were glad to do so for a consideration. When the agreement was reached, specifying that each of them would receive one dollar for every Klanswoman who came into the Order through their office, they sent word to all their klaverns urging the men to encourage establishment of this woman's official branch of the Klan by bringing their own women folk into it. Apparently their effort was fruitful for, as Mr. Cotton later remarked, "It was some of the easiest money I ever made."

In return for this cooperation, Mrs. Goodwin, when she selected her own Kleagles to work on a commission basis, appointed the wives of many of the prominent Klan officials. Mrs. A. L. Cotton, for example, was chosen and with little effort turned in the names and klectokens of many wives and sisters of the men whom her husband had recruited for the men's organization, keeping, of course, the two dollar commission per member to swell the family income. Mrs. William Davis likewise followed her husband into Westmoreland and Fayette Counties. Many Exalted



Cyclops of influence, when the Realm office urged the establishment of the women's Order, worked their wives into positions as local Kleagles.

It was of first importance to keep the good will of the leaders of the men's Order, for when their friendship was lost, as happened in several instances, their hostility spread to the local klan-tons with the result that recruiting in these areas was seriously hindered. When, after paying commissions to Rich and Cotton for over a year, Mrs. Goodwin decided to discontinue this practice and handle all the recruiting through her own Kleagles, the men's office suddenly lost its interest in the women's Order. Even the tactful appointment of women relatives as Kleagles did not altogether renew it. More ill will was engendered when, in an effort to increase funds which were available for her to use, Mrs. Goodwin attempted to reduce the amount of commission which these same relatives received as Kleagles. In Philadelphia, Mrs. Daisy Douglas Barr had been authorized to establish a recruiting office. Mrs. Barr had been a very successful Kleagle in Indiana and the national office had rewarded her with a fresh field in which to work. Mrs. Goodwin was also obliged to give her one dollar commission on each member brought in under her direction.

Besides the personal appeals of the Kleagles, many public meetings were held to attract women who might not otherwise have been interested in the Order. Several of the lecturers used most frequently were men who had been prominent in the men's Order. One of them, Judge Orbison, was an imperial officer of that Order. Another, Rev. J. R. Clark, of Pittsburgh, had been the first minister in the state to become a Klan lecturer. The danger of the Catholic hierarchy to American institutions was the most popular and effective subject used to arouse their audiences, and occasional addresses by alleged ex-nuns were sponsored by the Order. It was found advisable, however, to discontinue using ex-nuns in communities where there was a considerable Catholic population and where the Protestant group was fairly well informed.

The activities of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan paralleled closely those of the men's Order. In political affairs, the Klanswomen generally did not take the initiative in the choice of can-

didates or in the planning of campaigns. They usually followed the advice of the men and there were many political observers who thought that Klanswomen could be relied upon to vote as a bloc with more assurance than could Klansmen. Certainly the women's Klaverns were invaded as often as were the men's by hopeful candidates who, if they satisfied the racial, national, and denominational requirements which the Klan had set up, were given full opportunity to play upon the nativist sympathies of the women which they usually did to the neglect of every other issue. While this was not always effective, it sometimes resulted in the election of unscrupulous candidates simply because they were white, native-born Protestants. In Fayette County, for instance, there was elected as sheriff a man whose general moral and civic qualifications were of the lowest and who, while in office, turned out to be one of the worst criminals who ever disgraced that county. Without question he won the election only because Klansmen and Klanswomen had allowed nativist prejudice to obscure more important considerations.

Religiously, the Women of the Ku Klux Klan had less influence upon the organized church than had the men's Order. While it participated in church visitations, it was not as hungry for publicity as the men's Order primarily because it was not obliged to do so to get the attention of those whom it wished to recruit. Most of the visitations, therefore, were cooperative enterprises only, in which the initiative was taken by the Klansmen.

The educational activities of the women's Order were limited chiefly to its own members and came not directly as a planned program of the state or national office, but indirectly as a by-product of the lectures which the women attended in their recruiting campaigns and the gossip to which they listened in Klavern meetings. There was no official magazine published by the women's Order. Klanswomen were urged, however, as were the Klansmen, to read and distribute such publications as *The Fellowship Forum*. The women's Klan, initiated in Pennsylvania almost three years later than the men's, was still busy with the problem of recruiting more members when the organization began to disintegrate. So busy were its leaders in enlisting women in what was to be a great patriotic, educational, and religious crusade, that the crusade itself had hardly been started,—indeed had

hardly been conceived of except in the broadest general terms,—when internal dissention absorbed its energies and rapidly caused its destruction.

While the foregoing is true in regard to the political, religious and educational phases of their work, there was one activity in which the Klanswomen were relatively successful, namely, in their charities. Locally, the women's Klaverns generally, in proportion to their numbers, were more active in distributing food and raising money for needy people, than were the men. Collectively the Klanswomen initiated and carried to successful completion the establishment of a Klan orphanage named Pennsylvania Klan Haven. Mrs. Mary Goodwin, the first state Commander, was especially interested in the project. On several occasions she advanced her own private funds to meet obligations on the property when the limited resources of the Order were insufficient.

The property as originally purchased, comprised an estate of twenty-three and a fraction acres, part of which was woodland and part fruit trees, located east of Harrisburg. On it also stood a commodious stone house and a substantial barn. Klanswomen were told that the owner of this property had had an offer of \$100,000 made to him by a Catholic priest but preferred to sell it to the Klan for \$55,000. Of this price a down payment of \$5,000 was made and the balance was divided into installments. The orphanage had the approval of the Pinchot administration which issued a charter to operate the institution under the corporate name of Klan Haven Association.

The Association functioned through its own Board of Directors, secretary, treasurer, matron, and caretaker. Money raised in the various women's Klans over the state was sent directly to the treasurer of the Association whose accounts were regularly audited and checked by Mrs. Goodwin's office. The Klanswomen over the state undertook the maintenance of Klan Haven with considerable enthusiasm. Over forty children were soon placed there, some being privately maintained, some being placed there by court order and kept at public expense, and others being supported entirely through Klan benevolence. Meetings were held by the women for the specific purpose of raising funds for Klan Haven. Visitations were made to the grounds in order to increase interest in the institution and many gifts of food and cloth-

ing for the children were collected in the local Klaverns over the state and brought to Harrisburg.

Much gloom was thrown over the enterprise when the stone dwelling which housed the children accidentally caught on fire and burned on November 21, 1926. This made it necessary to rent quarters where the forty-six children who were being cared for at the time of the fire might be kept. A building called "Old Colonial Inn," on the river front north of Harrisburg was finally secured for this purpose. The insurance on the burned building was sufficient to permit the payment of a \$15,000 indebtedness which remained against the property. With this paid and with what was left of Klan Haven free of encumbrance, the women set to work immediately to raise sufficient funds to rebuild.

Those in charge of the men's Order who had been urged to aid in the support of Klan Haven from the time of its chartering had been half-hearted in their cooperation. This was chiefly because Mrs. Goodwin had not consented to their request that the men's Order be given joint control of the Association. The men had held that they should be represented on the Board of Directors if they contributed toward its support. Mrs. Goodwin wished Klan Haven to remain an institution managed by the women's Order and held out stubbornly against what she felt was an effort on the part of a few of the men in authority to get control of the funds of Klan Haven Association. In addition to this danger, Mrs. Goodwin had to contend with what was apparently a determined effort by a group within her own national organization to force this joint control above mentioned and, what was even worse in her judgment, to have the title to the property surrendered to the national organization as soon as it had been fully paid for by the state.

That Mrs. Goodwin was justified in her fears was amply proved by subsequent events. When she refused to comply with the wishes of the men's Order and of her own national office, steps were taken to remove her from her position as head of the Pennsylvania office. James A. Comer who, as husband of the Imperial Commander of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan and as Imperial Klonsel for the Order, was virtually dictating its policies, took the lead in ousting Mrs. Goodwin. She was subjected to a barrage of criticism from the national office. She was charged with



accepting gifts, a practice which, she was told, the national office had ruled against, even though Mrs. Comer herself had accepted them.<sup>3</sup> She was censured for delay in chartering Klans in the state<sup>4</sup> even though she was instructed not to send in applications for charters until the local membership of these Klans was ten per cent of the population of the area involved. Indeed, the national office had sent Mrs. Claudia Goodrich (a sister of H. W. Evans) into Pennsylvania to take charge of this work. Mrs. Goodwin was given contradictory orders and charged with the misuse of funds. When in October, 1926, she offered her resignation to Mrs. Comer, it was not accepted but several months later her successor, Miss Martha Turnley, was appointed and sent into the state to help destroy Mrs. Goodwin's influence among the membership of the Order several weeks before Mrs. Goodwin was notified that her resignation had finally been accepted.

Mrs. Goodwin's removal took place in January, 1927. On April 22 following, the Board of Directors of Klan Haven Association met and had present as "advisers" James A. Comer; a representative of the men's Order, Mr. C. B. Lewis; the two attorneys of the Association; and Mr. James Colescott of "Judge" Comer's staff. After these "advisers" had given a lengthy explanation of the great program of the national office to establish a uniform system of Klan Havens in all the states, the Board was led to adopt this alleged national policy and voted to reconstitute the personnel of the Board of Directors.<sup>5</sup> As reorganized, the Board of Directors was to consist of the Imperial Representative of the women's Order and the Grand Dragon of the men's Order as ex-officio members, six representatives of the men's Order (one from each Province) to be elected at their annual Klorero and similarly chosen provincial representatives from the women's Order.

A Committee was appointed and empowered to draw up a new constitution and laws in accordance with this decision and, if necessary, secure such changes in the charter as would permit this organization.

In defense of this new arrangement, it was explained that every Klansman and Klanswoman would thus actually become a member of Klan Haven Association and be represented on the Board of Directors. Actually, however, such an arrangement would have

resulted in the men's Order getting control. For, while the men's Order had already developed the provincial organization referred to, the women's Order had no provinces organized in the state and had no assurance that the national office would approve their establishment at this time. As actually set up, the Board of Directors of the Association did include the heads of the men's and women's Orders but substituted the first five grand officers of each organization in place of the provincial representatives.\*

The difficulties which were experienced in the Klan Haven affair were but one evidence of the growing dissatisfaction within the women's Order which, in January of 1927, resulted in the secession of the important Philadelphia and Chester Klaverns from the national organization and which eventually led to the disruption of the women's movement in eastern Pennsylvania.

The heart of the trouble was the inability of the state and local organizations to get a satisfactory hearing when they disagreed with the policies of their national office or to get redress when they felt aggrieved. Like the men's organization, the Constitution of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan had set up a military type of government for the Order, with power highly centralized in the national executive officers. After Robbie Gill's election to the position of Imperial Commander, the Order rapidly fell under the domination of James A. Comer and a few other high officials of the men's Order who gave orders to the women almost as freely as if they had had the constitutional right to do so.\*\*

This interference of the men was resented by many of the women in the Order. Glad for the cooperation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, the women were angered by what they felt was an attempt of the men to dictate to them and to exploit them. The Women of the Ku Klux Klan was set up as an autonomous Order and they wished to have it remain so. The kind of difficulties from which the local women's Klaverns suffered can be illustrated by the experiences of the Canwin Klan of Philadelphia, the largest\*\*\* and most important, perhaps, in eastern Pennsylvania.

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\*When this Board of Directors organized in July 1927, it is interesting to observe that, while Miss Martha Turnley was honored with the presidency of the Board, the officer who had charge of the funds was Franklin Horner, Treasurer of the men's Order.

\*\*The constitution had limited the membership of the Order to women so that orders and instructions, even if inspired by husbands or other male advisers, could be legally issued only by the proper women officials.

\*\*\*When chartered, in December, 1926, its membership was 1,400.

Mrs. Pearl Cantey was the organizer and executive head of this Klan. The corresponding officer in the men's organization was Paul M. Winter, field representative in charge of the Philadelphia County Klaverns. On one occasion both the men's and women's organizations had arranged to charter a boat for a trip down the Delaware with the hope of clearing a profit from the sale of tickets. This was done and from the crowded condition of the boat, the sale of tickets was apparently successful. When the time came to divide the profit, however, the women felt that the men deliberately cheated them. The women's record book of ticket sales was returned with pages torn out in order to make an accounting of the amount due them impossible. Moreover, the men alleged that many persons had gotten aboard the boat without tickets and that some of the men who had been given books of tickets to sell had lost them.<sup>6</sup>

On another occasion a hall was secured for a joint meeting of the men and women with the understanding that both organizations would share alike in the expenses. After the women had paid their share to Mr. Winter, who had made the financial arrangements, they learned that he had represented the expense of securing the auditorium as double its actual cost so that the women had paid the entire bill instead of their proportionate share.

More important than this financial exploitation in estranging the men's and women's Orders in Philadelphia was the case of Klansman Charles Lawrence who was charged with immoral relations with two Klanswomen. Paul Winter himself had come to Mrs. Cantey's office to lodge the charge against the women. Mrs. Cantey agreed to investigate and subsequently suspended both the women, one of whom confessed her misconduct. Expecting of course that Mr. Winter would take similar action against the Klansman involved, Mrs. Cantey and the members of her organization were angered to learn that he had taken no action against Lawrence but had, instead, elevated him to the office of County Treasurer of his Order.

With many comparable local irritations to make the women doubt the good will, if not of the majority of Klansmen, at least of their leaders, the situation became intolerable when members of the men's Order began to interfere in the internal affairs of

the women's Order itself. The change in Imperial Commanders when Mrs. Markwell was replaced by Miss Robbie Gill, although undoubtedly engineered by certain officials of the men's Order and although somewhat irregular, was not a very disturbing element in Pennsylvania. Miss Gill was personally quite an attractive woman. Most of the state leaders who had had any contact with her were charmed by her manner and address. The fact that Mrs. Barr, whose methods many felt had been questionable, was associated with the Markwell regime helped make the change to Miss Gill acceptable in this state. Moreover, Mrs. Goodwin, who had held the office of state organizer under Mrs. Markwell, continued in office; her conduct of affairs was approved and her territory was extended to include New York state. After the marriage of Miss Gill, however, her husband, James A. Comer, became increasingly active in Pennsylvania affairs. When it became apparent that this individual, under the title of Imperial Klonsel, was attempting to get Klan Haven out of the control of Mrs. Goodwin and her supporters, and when, in addition, it became evident that he was determined to remove Mrs. Goodwin from office, resentment against this male interference and against the national office in general increased to sizable proportions.

The Pennsylvania women who attended the national Klonselvocation held at Detroit in 1926, found the gathering virtually dominated by this same James A. Comer and his colleague, James Orbison, who sat on the platform and managed the procedure, "putting the motions, snapping their fingers and rushing things through."<sup>7</sup> The chief business of this meeting was the submission for approval of a revision of the Constitution of the women's Order broadening the power of the national executive particularly in the matter of the revocation of charters.

An attempt was made to disqualify the hostile delegation which came to Detroit from Pennsylvania on the ground that they did not have the correct dues cards with them. A long discussion ensued in which the Pennsylvania representatives tried to gain their voting privileges by showing that the national office was really at fault. The new dues cards had not been sent out from Little Rock but instead, instructions had been given to use the old ones which they had brought. It was at this same meeting that sixteen of the Pennsylvania delegates had tried to secure an



interview with the Imperial Commander but, when they came for the interview, Mr. Comer himself was the only one who would see them. Completely disgusted, Mrs. Cantey, who had represented her Philadelphia group, came home to describe the proceedings and urge a withdrawal from the national organization.

The difficulty which the Pennsylvania delegation had experienced at the Detroit Klonvocation was partly occasioned by the fact that Mr. James A. Comer's desire to remove Mrs. Goodwin was already known and the Philadelphia group, as well as of most of the Klans in the State, had come to support her. This support was further shown at the first state meeting called by Miss Turnley after her appointment and before Mrs. Goodwin had been officially notified of her own replacement. The Philadelphia group led in the protest against what they considered an unfair dismissal. Comer had gone to Philadelphia and called Mrs. Cantey into conference on the evening preceding this meeting in an effort to get her promise not to oppose his plans, but his refusal to talk to her in the presence of the women she had brought along from her own organization and the fact that he left her waiting a long time before he chose to see her only served to add to the ill-will of the women.

The result was that the next day at the State meeting Miss Turnley faced a hostile Philadelphia delegation. The demand was made that Mrs. Goodwin be brought in to receive a gift of flowers which the women wished to give her. An open protest was lodged against Mr. Comer's presence in the meeting. It was pointedly asked how he got the pass word necessary for admittance since none but women could legally receive it. When he retorted that he had advanced some \$8,000 to get the women's Order started and "owned it," the Philadelphia delegates left the meeting. They were persuaded to return by a request from Mrs. Goodwin herself. They came back only to be surprised and chagrined to hear Mrs. Goodwin's own resignation read to them. This was like having one's own general turn traitor. As Mrs. Cantey remarked, "Here we had been fighting for her against the attempt of the National to get her out and then she didn't have nerve enough herself to carry it through." At a general meeting of the Philadelphia Klan on January 22, 1927 the vote on

withdrawal was taken and passed with but one dissenting vote, a decision which the Chester Klan had taken the preceding day.

For a time the women of the Philadelphia Klan continued to meet as "The Women's Christian Patriotic League" which Mrs. Cantey had chartered under her own name. Feeling ran so high for some months afterwards that she kept constant guards in her office to be secure against insult and possible raids upon her files.

The men's organization had also begun to have serious internal strife which in Philadelphia and some western sections of the state was carried to the extreme of violence. In Philadelphia the revolt was chiefly against Paul M. Winter and his methods. In western Pennsylvania a group of leading Klansmen had been engaged in an attempt to secure Sam Rich's removal and to reform the state office. Klaverns took sides and worked against each other. In many instances factions developed within the local organizations and a rapid decline in membership and in activities had set in.

Since most of the women's Klans consisted of wives and sisters of Klansmen, similar divisions inevitably grew in their organizations with the same results. Inquiries made to Klanswomen in various sections of the state resulted in practically the same reply: "We broke up when the men did." A few women met in each other's homes a little while afterwards but they grew increasingly inactive.

### *References*

1. Report of J. A. Comer to the Second Imperial Klonsvokation of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, September 25, 1924. Proceedings p. 112.
2. Correspondence of Jessie Sauer to Mary I. Goodwin, February 29, 1924.
3. Interview with Mrs. Pearl Cantey who served as Kleagle in Reading, then in Philadelphia after Mrs. Barr's removal, and was later Excellent Commander of the Canwin Klan.
4. One telegram signed by James A. Comer read: "DO YOU REFUSE TO COMPLY WITH ORDERS IN CONNECTION WITH CHARTERING IN PENNSYLVANIA ANSWER YES OR NO STOP NO EXCUSE FOR SUCH DELAY."
5. Extracts from the Bulletin of the Annual Meeting of Klan Haven Association, Harrisburg, Pa., April 22, 1927.
6. Testimony of Mrs. Pearl Cantey.
7. Report of Pearl Cantey to her Philadelphia Klan.

## CHAPTER 11

### THE DECLINE OF THE KU KLUX KLAN IN PENNSYLVANIA: DISSATISFACTION IN THE EASTERN PROVINCE

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*You're "sick of the game?" Well, now, that's a shame,*

*You're young and you're brave, and you're bright;  
You've had a "raw deal," I know, but don't squeal,  
Buck up, do your damndest and fight.*

*—Quoted on the cover page of "The Kourier  
Magazine," August, 1930.*

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The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania reached the peak of its numerical strength early in 1925. The leaders then claimed an approximate membership of 300,000 Klansmen but refused to be definite as to the exact number or to give any proof of the accuracy of their approximation. There is considerable reason to believe that their claim was exaggerated. It might more accurately represent the total number of Klansmen who had joined the Order up to the end of that year for there were hardly more than 200,000—at most 260,000—in good standing at any time within the realm. The decline after 1925 was rapid and is shown by the following table:<sup>1</sup>

#### Klan Membership in Pennsylvania

1926 .....	71,177
1927 .....	31,099
1928 .....	18,916
1929 .....	10,428
1930 .....	4,279

In an attempt to explain this decline, it is useful to recall the general circumstances which led to the rapid growth of the Order. First, there was the fact that the traditional mental stereotypes of Pope, Catholic, foreigner, "nigger" and Jew which thousands

of Americans held were such as to engender fear and hatred of them. Then there was the fact that the Klan offered an avenue of escape from the monotony which characterized life in the average village or rural community. There was also the fact that the economic readjustment which followed the war resulted in increased competition for jobs and made many people eager to find a convenient scape-goat upon whom to lay the blame for their declining fortunes. Finally, there was the post-war hysteria which found a negative expression in the fear and hatred of all things that were foreign or different, whether the difference be in race, nationality or culture.\*

Had conditions changed after 1925 so that these factors which produced the Klan no longer existed or, if they did exist, were no longer effective in stimulating membership in the Order? From correspondence and interviews with ex-Klansmen in many parts of the state, the writer is convinced that most of their mental stereotypes remained unaltered. Catholics were still considered, if not as actual, certainly as potential traitors to their country, the Pope as a scheming tyrant thirsty for temporal power if not the actual anti-Christ prophesied in the book of Revelation and the superior Nordics as the chosen of God to rule over all other people in the United States who were racially distinguishable from them. The presuppositions of Klan doctrine—Catholic treachery, white supremacy, Protestant orthodoxy—were not questioned or questionable. One Klansman who sorrowfully withdrew from the Order having been convinced that its leaders were subverting "its glorious tenets" significantly stated: "There was nothing wrong with the Klan principles. But the members—they weren't big enough for the Order."<sup>2</sup> Another in like circumstances apologized for leaving the Order when Protestantism was declining "while its enemy lies waiting to thrust the knife into its very vitals" and when "the hordes of foreigners who have swept across our shores . . . tear down that which we have built up and prized, break without fear or favor our laws, destroy our Constitution, desecrate our Sabbath, control our politics and

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\*This anti-foreign hysteria found a positive form of expression which was almost as intense but far less dangerous. A riot of biographies of American heroes—statesmen, cowboys and pioneers—were written. Motion pictures like "The Covered Wagon," "The Iron Horse," and "When Old New York was Young" were filmed and patriotic capitalists reconstructed the Wayside Inn of Longfellow and rebuilt the town of Williamsburg as monuments to "American" culture.



seek to usurp our power." "I believed the Invisible Empire to be bigger and greater than any Klansman within its ranks . . . but when those who have been entrusted with authority and who thereby should be over-zealous in their efforts to see that these sacred principles were upheld, trample them under feet for their own selfish ends and for the reason of self-aggrandizement, the time has come when those who have declared that honor is greater than life itself should decide which step to take for Right or for Wrong, for Honor or for Dishonor, for the principles of Klancraft or for the autocratic methods of those who would force down the throats of clean, honest, Protestant, Americans a practice of ignorance that views (sic) with the Romanist methods for immensity."<sup>3</sup>

These statements are typical and bear witness to the fact that it was not a rejection of the nativist principles of the Order which caused the withdrawal of genuine Klansmen, but the failure of the Klan leaders to live up to them and to be guided by them in the formation of their policies.

In regard to the second factor listed above, namely, the lure of the Klan for the thrill-seekers, the situation had changed considerably. The mysteries of the Order had become commonplace and, as initiations ceased, the vicarious pleasure of imparting mysteries likewise disappeared. Secret direct action against Klan-indicted culprits had brought such a storm of popular disapproval that the Order in Pennsylvania had abandoned much of its violence for the safer activities of political intrigue and became little more than a political faction or bloc like the Catholic bloc or the foreign bloc which it condemned. This, of course, lessened the possibility of thrills for, while political manipulation is doubtless interesting enough for the manipulator, it is usually quite dull for the healer and the ordinary rank and file.

Some attempt was made to appeal to the curiosity and love of mystery by introducing a second degree called Knights Kamelia and, later, the degree of *Kwand*. Locally some sport was found in conducting initiates through the rites of the order of *Imps* (an acrostic for I Maintain Protestant Supremacy) and the Yellow Dog degree. These elicited a little excitement and some raucous guffaws but were as impotent to maintain an abiding interest as was the initial kloranic ritual.

The post-war economic depression had likewise lifted by 1925. The immigration law of 1924 had virtually removed the newly-arrived immigrant as a factor in the labor market. This fact together with the disappearance of panic conditions, while not removing the danger of the alien's influence upon the survival of nativist culture, did remove from the mind of the average nativist the lively consciousness of the alien's presence which the latter's economic competition had created during the panic years.

More important than these changes, however, was the fact that the passing of the years had checked the efflorescence of nationalism, at least in its negative aspects. The "Big Red Scare," like a pricked balloon, had collapsed when quieter nerves gave a hearing to the evidences of its exaggeration. "Big Bill" Thompson and Mayor Hylan, who had earlier capitalized the anti-British sentiment which Irish and German antipathy and the controversy over war debt payment had helped to nourish, soon became the object of jest among many of the people who had voted for them; and William Jennings Bryan, in spite of his apparent martyrdom, was worshipped by a rapidly diminishing group of religious bitter-enders whose opposition to evolution had been fostered not only by a vestigial fundamentalism but also by a hatred of "foreign" ideas. Whether or not economic conditions were causally related to the change in national psychology, nevertheless the full years of 1926-1929 witnessed a steady decline in the nativists' fear that our American institutions were being endangered, just as the lean years of the panic had been coincident with an increased feeling of cultural insecurity.

Thus, in spite of the fact that the basic mental conceptions of the true nativists were not altered after 1925, the situation had changed sufficiently to de-emotionalize these conceptions and sever them from the source of power which had translated them from ideas into action. As important as this fact is, it is, however, less important as a cause for the Klan's decline in Pennsylvania than the internal dissention which developed in the Order. Revolt from within, not criticism from without, broke the Klan. The shafts against Klan principles which were so constantly launched by its foes had glanced harmlessly off the impregnable armor of Klan conviction. Only as outside critics were able to cause doubt in the minds of Klansmen regarding the sincerity,

honesty and ability of Klan leaders, were they at all effective. Klansmen themselves laid their Order at the feet of their exultant opponents.

To understand this internal dissention, one must keep in mind that applications for membership had been carelessly accepted in the heyday of recruiting. Whether moved by the ambition for political power, a crass cupidity or a baser combination of the two, Klan leaders of the type of D. C. Stephenson, Sam D. Rich and James A. Comer saw the rapid attainment of their goals only by furious recruiting and encouraged this practice in spite of their undoubted knowledge of its danger to the permanence of the Order. Indeed, the fact that the higher officials of the Order put so little of its income into anything that would show their expectation of a permanent organization, lends support to the belief that they anticipated the temporary character of the Klan.\*

In any event, the heterogeneous group which was admitted to "citizenship" was destined to divide into factions even after the mere curiosity-seekers had dropped out. Some Klansmen were lax in their ethical standards and irritated many others who joined the Order, thinking it to be a crusade for Puritan morality. Again, some were conservative and opposed the use of strong-arm methods and activities that might provoke violence. Practically every Klavern had its quota of "young bloods" who wished to secure fire-eating "ex-priests" to lecture at open meetings, to burn crosses on the front lawn of some Catholic priest to tack up warnings and send letters ominously signed with red K K K's or parade masked and heavily armed through Catholic communities where violent opposition had been aroused. Even if a Klan was fortunate enough not to have many believers in such direct action, it was seldom free from men who were professional gossip mongers, men who used the Klavern floor to air their private hates.\*\*

There were some Klans where strong political loyalties divided the Klansmen into opposing groups. Conscientious Democrats

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\*See ante, p. 80.

\*\*So prevalent was this that the national officials took occasion to warn the local Cyclops to be firm against every Klansman who tried it. See for example the Minutes of the State Klorero, Dec. 6, 1924, p. 14: "You should not allow men to spread dissention on the floor of the Klavern...If a man comes into your Klavern and starts a tirade about something that somebody is doing in the organization or something of that kind, he should be stopped then and there. No one has a right to come into your organization and tell you about their grief...If a man gets up on the floor of the klavern and talks about some other klansman who was out with some other man's wife, the klavern is not the place to take it up..." (Klansman Curry)

were irritated to see a Republican boss get control of the organization and manipulate it to serve Republican interests in the general elections. The reverse situation, though less frequent, was, if anything, more irritating than that just mentioned because there were more Republicans than Democrats in the State who gave religious devotion to their party. This political factionalism was especially bad when competing Klan candidates were in the field and talked against each other in the Klavern meetings.

Some Klan leaders saw this factionalism growing and the wiser ones tried to check it. When appeal and persuasion proved ineffective means toward this end, it was always possible to use disciplinary suspension. In hopeless cases, or when the officials became jittery, they could always fall back on the surgery of banishment. This latter device was used with increasing frequency after 1925 and served to hasten rather than to save the Order from collapse. By that time the Realm was divided into strong factions and banishment was no longer interpreted as individual punishment but as action against the group to which the banished member had belonged. The result in many instances was that local Klans disregarded the banishment decrees and refused to enforce them.

This defiance of the higher officials in regard to banishment lead to a controversy over the constitutionality of the procedure followed. Article XX of the Klan Constitution outlined a method whereby banishment could regularly be issued only for major offenses\* and then only after a certain routine had been followed. A written charge specifying the offense had to be filed and a grand jury investigation by a Klokann committee conducted.<sup>4</sup> Then a trial had to be held before a Tribunal of sixteen Klansmen of whom twelve must concur in awarding the penalty and, if desired, the right of appeal to the Grand Tribunal or Imperial Klonsilium had to be given. Only after conviction by this procedure, could notice of banishment be issued by the Grand Dragon and the doors of every Klavern in the Realm be shut against the one so convicted.

In actual practice, however, banishment decrees were issued both by the Imperial Wizard and by the Grand Dragon without any of this procedure having been followed, without even a warn-

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\*See Ante, p. 75.



ing having been given to the individual or group banished. The obvious reason for this was the fact that these officials knew that the men they wished to remove would not be convicted by members of their own local organization.

While it is easy to understand the circumstances which led state and national officials to act over the heads of the local Klans, it is just as easy to understand the hostile reaction of the latter to such action. Angered by what they felt to be the most obvious illegality and injustice, local Kligrapps wrote biting letters to the Imperial and Realm offices citing Article XX of the Klan Constitution referred to above. The Realm officials, refusing to back down, referred in reply to the military character of the Order and the oath which all Klansmen took to obey their superiors. In addition, there were a few cases where the Realm office went to the extent of completely eliminating an antagonistic local Klan, revoking its charter and banishing all its members as a group. This fate was suffered, for instance, by the William Penn Klan in Pittsburgh and by the Warren G. Harding Klan of Philadelphia.

The Klan Constitution, however, was really somewhat ambiguous in regard to this matter. In spite of its provision that *all charges* for which banishment was a possible penalty had to be in writing and had to be investigated and substantiated by regular trial procedure, there was also the provision which vested the Imperial Wizard "with authority . . . at his discretion to issue banishment order" against a Klansman for any offense other than those listed by the Constitution "that is inimical to the best interest of this Order."<sup>5</sup> It is not specifically stated in connection with this power of banishment given the Wizard that guilt must first be proved by the regularly constituted tribunals of the Order. The Wizard chose to interpret his power broadly and to act "at his discretion" as judge as well as executioner of decrees. There was no similar authority given to the Grand Dragon by the Constitution but, since the Imperial Wizard preferred to support his Realm representative in Pennsylvania when the latter arbitrarily banished Klansmen, there remained no source of redress.

The controversy over banishments was but one small phase of a larger struggle which developed between the local Klans, or

factions within them, and their state and national leaders. The antagonism was originally focused primarily upon two individuals but as time went on, it spread to include not only their followers within the state but the national officials whose support they enjoyed. Although somewhat similar factors were involved in both instances, the dramatic quality of the controversy can best be re-created by describing them separately.

The first centered in Philadelphia County. It was the most populous area in the state and had a number of Klaverns. There was William Penn Klavern at 52nd Street and Girard Avenue, "the Mother Klan of Philadelphia." There was Old Glory No. 5 where Frank A. Whitesell and Bervin A. Taylor served as Exalted Cyclops. It met in the fortieth ward. Liberty Bell Klan met in the P. O. S. of A. Hall at 29th and Dauphin Streets and used it as a depot for weapons when the controversy took on a violent phase. There was also the Warren G. Harding Klan where Walter Turner served as Exalted Cyclops. This Klan had the distinction of having its total membership (some 550) banished as a unit. Another of the Klans which met at 27th Street and Columbia Avenue was named for Paul M. Winter, who was Hiram Evans' field representative in the Philadelphia district.

The person thus honored, Paul Meres Winter, gradually became the object of outspoken criticism by many of the Klansmen under his jurisdiction who finally joined together in an organized attempt to have him removed from office. He was not a native Philadelphian but was sent there from the Reading district. Although a small man physically, his assertiveness and vitality compensated somewhat for his unimpressive stature. Evidently he had had little business success before he joined the Order to recommend him for the administrative position which he was given. He was loose in his personal finances and, in spite of the large income which he received from his commission on the approximately 30,000 members who paid their "donations" within his jurisdiction, in 1926 he was without credit. His own father had refused to do anything more for him financially and he was obliged to appeal to his personal friends for money in order to meet the payments due on his house.<sup>6</sup> During the flush years, however, especially during 1923 and 1924, when the Klan

was still regarded as a great crusade and its leaders suffered no embarrassment from demands that regular accounting be made of the funds of the Order, Winter enjoyed considerable popularity. In addition to his regular revenues, he received substantial gifts from his Klansmen in appreciation for his services to the Order. On one occasion they raised sufficient funds to purchase a Packard automobile for him. When the business of recruiting declined and it became necessary to replace the demonstrations and shouting with the quieter tasks of operating the Klans already overloaded with members, Winter's leadership was less successful. The appointment of Charles Lawrence as County Treasurer in charge of all funds\* was particularly unwise and led to much suspicion. Lawrence was judged to be untrustworthy and immoral. Many Klansmen were led to the conclusion that Winter himself wasn't "straight." As one of these Klansmen said: "You can't explain the Lawrence affair unless Winter was as crooked as Lawrence or unless Lawrence had something on Winter."

As opposition to him grew, Winter began to fight back choosing to use against the disaffected Klansmen the same type of coercion that had previously given the Order such an unsavory name when used against non-Klansmen. Winter's methods can be illustrated by citing several specific examples. William O. Cantey was one of the men chosen for punishment. Having transferred from Erie, he had been in Philadelphia only a short time when he felt that the Klan leadership there was bad and had so expressed himself. He had a small auto repair and garage business in which he had invested some \$17,000. Winter threatened him with the loss of his business if he persisted in his criticism. When Winter's antagonism to him increased because of the near feud which developed with the women's Klan over which Cantey's wife presided as Kleagle, Winter's determined to act. One of the first things that was done was to notify the public that Cantey was a Klansman. Winter knew that this would result in a partial boycott of his garage by people opposed to the Klan. To effect this purpose the letters K K K were prominently painted over his garage. Agents were assigned to picket his shop to warn those who patronized it and to see if

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\*See Ante, p. 158.

he talked with any other Klansmen. All the latter were threatened with banishment if they violated the order ostracizing him.

Dayton Laubach suffered from somewhat similar tactics. He was the owner and proprietor of a jewelry store on Woodland Avenue where he served his neighborhood as confidant and adviser as well as watch repairman and optician. Loyal to his friends, he had built up the confidence and respect of quite a group of people in the fortieth ward district. However mixed his motives for joining the Klan—for he profited from a jewelry business of considerable size with the Order—he was, like many others, disturbed about the corrupt practices of Winter and his agents. Unlike many others, he had the courage to speak his mind and Winter struck back. A whispering campaign was begun to inform Catholics and other anti-Klan groups of Laubach's affiliation with the Order. While this produced a noticeable reduction in his business, Winter did not stop here.<sup>8</sup> Laubach was especially dangerous because of his popularity and ability to lead the men of his own district. In order to destroy the regard in which other Klansmen held him, Winter repeatedly declared to gatherings of Klansmen that he had proof that Laubach was implicated in the theft of two government automobiles.<sup>9</sup> Winter even went to the extent of having his agents threaten Laubach with his life if he did not leave town, giving him forty-eight hours to get out. Unlike Cantey, who was not so well known and had fewer friends to help him, Laubach was able to defend himself against Winter's threats. Indeed, he gathered so much evidence against Winter and so many affidavits in proof of his own innocence that Winter was forced to sign a written apology and promise publicly to confess his error.

Laubach was fortunate in having the resources to fight Winter. Other Klansmen had neither the time nor the money to do this and dropped out of the Order or were banished for petty offenses by hand picked Tribunals.<sup>10</sup> To deal with his more obstinate critics, Winter had organized, with the knowledge of and apparently with the approval of the Imperial office, a Super-Secret Society which soon became known as "the black-robed gang." Captained by a young dare-devil, William G. Seemiller, it en-



gaged, under Winter's orders, in a campaign planned to terrorize his critics into silence and inactivity.

In organizing this Triple-S Society, Winter had available as a model a group which certain leaders in the State of Ohio had created within the Klan and had found very useful when dangerous undertakings were decided upon. This Ohio group was known as the Night Riders and, according to the testimony of one of its leaders, had quite a career of violence.<sup>11</sup> The membership of Winter's Triple-S Society was, like that of the Night Riders, unknown to the other Klansmen. Distinguishable by their black robes and hoods upon which was an insignia which combined the regular Klan pattern with a skull and cross-bones, they never raised their visors.

On several occasions Winter himself had introduced this group to the various Klaverns, prefacing their entrance with a speech in which he "advised the Klansmen present that, if anyone should receive a phone call at any time, they should obey anything they (the Super Secret group) told them and ask no questions."<sup>12</sup> Among the activities of this Society which were reported were: an assault made by some of its members upon the Kludd of Liberty Bell Klavern in one of the Klavern meetings; the destruction of a private garage of another Klansman; the kidnapping and threatened tarring and feathering of Klansman Klingerman. It was reported that the group had formed plans to tar and feather six other Klansmen. A deputation went to the Imperial Wizard at Washington to report and protest against these activities. But when, in October of 1926, it became evident that no relief could be obtained from national headquarters, a group of Klansmen who were being persecuted decided to organize in order to protect themselves and, if possible, to secure Winter's removal. Organized as "the I.K.K.D. of F.," one of the first steps taken by this group was to prepare a letter and mail it to one thousand leading Klansmen in an effort to create a general reform movement within the Klan. Appealing to the law-abiding element, they wrote:

" . . . You and we alike gave our allegiance to the Invisible Empire believing that those who have been honored with office had first these great principles at heart. That they believed in the oath and obligation which we assumed

at the Sacred Altar and that they as well as we would sacrifice all to see that these and our great principles were upheld. Then we sat blinded to the fact that our field Representative was building up a far more autocratic organization than *Rome* ever dared to build, treading upon and destroying these sacred oaths and obligations just as he saw fit to serve his own selfish ends. This seems like a broad statement but God has blessed you with the power of thought and let us stop and see the things that have been going on around us, and what we have been blinded to."

Then followed charges against the Super Secret Society and especially against Winter himself. He had, either personally or through his agency, the Triple-S Society, according to the K. D. of F., (1) broken his Klan Oath and the Imperial Instructions No. 1, (2) revealed the identity of Klansmen to the alien world, (3) ruined the business of Klansmen, (4) lied unmercifully, (5) given no adequate accounting of Klan funds, (6) taken foreign-born into the Order, (7) driven men from the organization by trumped up charges and instructed juries, (8) ordered Klansmen to stay away from Klaverns not their own, (9) lied about Sam Rich and the State funds, and (10) prevented the chartering of the Klans. The letter closed with a challenge:

"The K. D. of F. dares Paul M. Winter to stand trial for banishment and treason with a jury composed of clergymen (ordained) who are also Klansmen. We demand this kind of a jury because we know that other juries have been packed and instructed and we trust that those who have taken up the mantle of Christ's ministry cannot be bribed or coerced but will render a just verdict. Will he accept this challenge? Ask *Him*? If he is innocent of these charges, he has nothing to fear and certainly he would be vindicated. The time has come when these wrongs shall be redressed and right shall rule the earth and when no one who, for the lure of gold or the temptings of envy or personal ambitions, shall drag through the mire the *Sacred* cause we have espoused . . ."

Branding the writers of this letter as cowards "determined to break the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Philadelphia County," Winter replied to this letter saying that he would "face the writer or writers of this communication at any time or place requested . . . and answer your lies,"

The K. D. of F. promptly responded with a long communication again condemning Winter's "treasonable acts" and claiming that he had "done more to break the Organization than anyone that we know of, including Rome itself." Quite evidently the trial and banishment of Klansmen was a special grievance. "You call your treasonable acts mistakes and try to blind the county to your activities, while you place on trial good honest Klansmen who were better Klansmen than you'll ever be." Demanding that Winter "make amends immediately," the letter concluded by threatening that "if this is not done, you will witness one of the most sad, sorrowful and eventful years in the history of the Klan *for its officials* in the state of Pennsylvania and probably in the United States."

When the excitement over the activities of the Triple-S Society was developing, its captain, William G. Seemiller, was himself brought to trial. He tried to excuse, if not to justify, his actions on the ground that his superior had ordered them. Winter, however, claimed that his orders had been exceeded although it is evident that there were many Klansmen who disbelieved his claim. Seemiller subsequently turned extremely hostile to Winter, not alone because Winter failed to support him at his trial but also because he blamed Winter for causing an estrangement between Mrs. Seemiller and himself which resulted in their separation.

Indeed, the charges that finally brought Winter to trial were made by this same ex-captain of the Super-Secret Society whom Winter formerly trusted to rid him of his critics. Although the Klokann found the charges made against Winter true, the Tribunal before which the case was presented was unable to muster the necessary votes—twelve out of sixteen—to get a conviction. This is in part explained by the fact that the influence of Charles Lewis, Imperial Representative for Eastern Pennsylvania, and that of the Imperial office as well was exerted in behalf of Winter.

In retaliation for this effort to oust him, Winter not only immediately banished the Klansmen who took leading parts in his prosecution but also unconditionally disbanded the local Klan in which the trial was held. While Winter escaped conviction in this trial, the total effect of the controversy upon the Order

itself was disastrous, for it lost heavily both in prestige and in membership.

The disbanded Warren G. Harding Klansmen met and organized under the name of "the American Debating Society." Another group, calling themselves "The Twenty-Six Club" organized to carry on the fight against Winter's "overlordship." These and other groups, one of which took the name of "American Christian Patriotic League," made up of people who had dropped out or been driven out of the Order were referred to as "The Independent Klan." Realm officials in other parts of the State who were aware of what was transpiring in Philadelphia, tried to hush the matter up and, when they did need to answer questions about it, attempted to laugh it out of countenance.

Thus, in the Philadelphia District, the men's as well as the women's Order suffered a secessionist movement in 1926 and early in 1927 which left the parent organizations weak and bitter. In both instances, the disaffected rank and file had found their chief danger not in Catholic or alien threats to their liberties but in the actions of their own leaders.\*

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\*Pennsylvania Klansmen were not alone in this secessionist movement. The New Haven Connecticut Klan for instance had taken similar action almost a year previous and had published the following manifesto addressed to the Imperial Klaliff at Indianapolis:

"No American worthy of the name can longer affiliate with an organization such as the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of Georgia, Inc. now is and maintain his self-respect. Today, under the leadership of Mr. Hiram Wesley Evans and yourself, the Klan has degenerated into nothing less than an organization of greed.

It has become a travesty on patriotism and a blasphemous caricature professing Protestantism. It is not only anti-Catholic and anti-Jew, but absolutely anti-American and anti-Protestant.

It has become without question the greatest menace facing the American people today. For every good man severing his connection with it, ten men are taken in that would shame a ward leader in Tammany Hall. The thousands of good Protestant Americans are blind to its intrigues and crooked methods.

Real Americans must be awakened and made to use every effort to stamp out this slimy serpent that threatens the very life of our Nation. Hundreds of real men in this old city of New Haven are glad to declare themselves, and for that reason a copy of this letter goes to the public press to use as their editors see fit."

—*The Independent*, (N. Y.) Jan. 1926, p. 59.

### References

1. *The Washington Post*. Nov. 2, 1930, Section I, p. 14.
2. Testimony of Klansman Frank Stoner of Scottsdale Klan No. 37.
3. Testimony of Klansman Harold R. Hoffman, in charge of the K-Duo Degree, Philadelphia.
4. Constitution and By-Laws of the Klan. Article XX, Section 6.
5. *Ibid.* Article XX, Section 34.
6. Dayton Laubach Correspondence. Hartwell Stafford, editor of the *Philadelphia Masonic Magazine*, was thus importuned and made a loan of \$500, to Winter who promptly defaulted on his payment's.
7. Testimony of Klansman W. O. Cantey.
8. Affidavits of Klansmen James M. Henry and Robert S. Morrison.
9. Affidavits of the following men who heard Winter make this charge: Harold R. Hoffman, William O. Mattner, R. C. Shran, Gustav Schreiber, Robert Morrison, Everett Blakeman, James McHenry, James A. MacFarland, Jr., William Frederickson.
10. Correspondence of Richard R. Hoffman to Robert Moore, Jan. 27, 1926.
11. Testimony of J. R. Ramsey of Dayton, Ohio.
12. Affidavits of Albert P. Bailey and eight other Klansmen.



## CHAPTER 12

### THE DECLINE OF THE KU KLUX KLAN IN PENNSYLVANIA: REVOLT IN PROVINCE II

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*“ . . . Man, proud man,  
Drest in a little brief authority,  
Most ignorant of what he's most assured.”*  
—Shakespeare

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There was likewise much dissention in the western Province of the Realm where Sam D. Rich, the Acting Grand Dragon of the Realm, was the official upon whom most of the criticism was focused. A multitude of minor incidents had created a deep dissatisfaction with his leadership. For one thing, he was much too careless and repeatedly failed to keep his promises to his local Klans and to his subordinate officials. He frequently promised to speak at Klan gatherings and, after he had been advertised as an attraction, failed to appear without giving the sponsoring Klan any notice of his indisposition and without offering an apology for what was, at least, a breach of common courtesy.

Rich's memory seemed especially poor with regard to his financial obligations. As an example, he had encouraged Lincoln Klan No. 21 at Mt. Pleasant to plan a large demonstration on a neighboring mountain top. It was to be a gala affair and some thousands of visiting Klansmen from Westmoreland, Allegheny, Somerset and Fayette Counties were expected to attend. The preparations were expensive and, while such demonstrations usually showed a profit for the Klan which sponsored them, Rich had promised to make up from Realm funds any deficit which might occur. It happened that the weather on the night of the demonstration was unusually inclement and the attendance consequently was much smaller than was anticipated. The profits from gate receipts and from sales on the grounds were correspondingly meager so that there was a deficit of some hundreds of dollars. In spite of Rich's promise to pay this and in spite of the per-

sistence of the Kligrapp of Lincoln Klan, Rich never met the obligation and it eventually had to be paid from local funds. Wilkinsburg Klan had a similar experience in its failure to collect a subsidy which Rich had promised for a demonstration in behalf of the Junior Order of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

Characteristic of Rich's financial dealings was his treatment of his subordinates. John B. Davis, for example, was persuaded by Rich to leave an excellent position in order to accept a Klan inspectorship at a slight increase in salary. After he had accepted Rich's offer—albeit against the advice of Joseph Shoemaker who was familiar with the financial practices of his chief—he was obliged to accept successive reductions in pay until his salary was considerably under his former income.<sup>1</sup> A. L. Cotton complained of often having great difficulty in collecting what was due him. Lemuel Peebles testified to a shortage of \$2,000 in the amount which the State office had paid him.<sup>2</sup>

Those whose contacts with Rich were most numerous felt that his untrustworthiness went farther than persistent attempts to avoid his financial obligations and a failure to meet his appointments. They became convinced that he was generally unreliable. They found him guilty of a deliberate effort to sow discord among his staff members. His treatment of A. L. Cotton and Joseph Shoemaker is a case in point. Perhaps he feared the growing power of these two men who had been successful organizers and had grown into close personal friends. He disliked the fact that Klansmen, coming into the Realm office, usually preferred to talk with these subordinates rather than with him. As Cotton himself related his experience: "Rich's policy was to poison each of his Kleagles against the others. He certainly told me a lot of lies about Joe and Joe a lot about me . . . When Peebles and I were at the Harrisburg office together he tried the same thing. 'You keep this under your hat but I don't trust Peebles,' and so on and on." Fred R. Dent, one of the prominent lecturers for the Klan, had a similar estimate of Rich's unreliability: "You couldn't pin him down. When there were differences of opinion or when some one came into the office dissatisfied, he would always say, 'Well, let's lay our cards on the table,' but he never would lay his on. You were seldom sure of him."

It is significant commentary on Rich's character that he employed many service men to spy on the Kleagles, even those whom he himself had chosen. A comment by one of these investigators is typical of a general feeling that "Sam didn't trust anybody. He didn't trust me. He was constantly sending out agents to check on the officers and on each other."<sup>3</sup>

The volume of this growing dissatisfaction made organized opposition to Rich almost inevitable. The fact that it began in Westmoreland County was largely fortuitous for in Allegheny County the criticism of his administration was also outspoken. Perhaps the initiative was taken by the Westmoreland Klans because they were among the few Klans in the state which had organized into a County Unit whose officials were granted some authority over the local officials. Moreover, the Exalted Cyclops of the County Klan, Rev. John F. Strayer, then of Latrobe, had been having a lengthy quarrel with Rich over the latter's failure to authorize a trial for two members of the Greensburg local No. 3 who had been suspended.

Leading up to this quarrel was the factionalism within the local Klaverns when the Westmoreland County Klan was organized. This is quite evident from the following quotation made from an early letter which Exalted Cyclops Strayer sent to the Klans within the county.

" . . . If we can maintain the spirit of unity, and Christian forbearance among ourselves, no evil power can ever break us . . . But if on the other hand strife, divisions, jealousy, brother going to law with brother, schism, enter the Klan we are doomed and doomed speedily. O! my brothers, I hear there are divisions among you and I partly believe it. This letter is an appeal for unity in Westmoreland Co. . . .

"We are asking that each local Klan in the County who has not already done so shall at once appoint four members, (these may be officers or not as the Klan may determine) who shall meet with the representatives of the other Klans, on the second Sunday afternoon of each month in the I. O. O. F. hall in the Kounty Seat, and work and plan for the best interests of Klandom in Westmoreland Kounty. Please do not fail us. The Kounty Klan . . . is the greatest unifying force of which I am aware. There are great political issues at stake and we can more capably meet and win these through a centralized unit . . ."

The Greensburg local suffered particularly from this malady. Indeed, Rich had early sought to remedy the condition by granting permission to the leader of one faction, Squire James B. Smail, to organize a second Klan in the town "because of the strife and friction now going on in the present Klan."<sup>4</sup> Affairs improved for a time and Smail did not leave his Klavern. In May, 1925, after the quarrel had begun anew, Squire Smail and an associate, Sam Lopus, were suspended but no charges preferred against them. Strayer, as Exalted Cyclops of the County unit, thought that specific charges should have been made and an opportunity given for the suspended men to defend themselves. He wrote Rich to that effect. A communication under date of July 15 reveals his growing bitterness.

" . . . Sam, I have tried to be a good Klansman; I have answered when you have called. I have given the best that I had to the Klan; I have tried to be loyal and to serve. I know that something is wrong in Greensburg, and if we are to succeed the clear white light must shine. I know not who your secret agents are,—I do not want to know. But for one who loves his native land and our great fraternity, yea, more than life, I ask that immediate attention be given to this matter. If these my fellow Klansmen are guilty of crime, we should know it that we may shun them. If they are what they have always appeared to be, good, honest, fearless, loyal Klansmen they should be vindicated and their accusers thrown into the Lion's den . . . "

Rich refused to act and the matter was referred to the national office at Washington, D. C. It was not until January 12, 1926, however, that H. W. Evans wrote to say that he had issued orders "that the matter receive attention."

This apparent injustice to "loyal Klansmen" and deafness to the appeals of the Westmoreland County leaders only served to increase their belief in the corruption of their Realm chief and to encourage them to gather sufficient evidence thereof to force his removal. Finally, incensed by a very brief statement of the Realm finances which Rich had issued and which his critics considered inadequate and misleading, the Westmoreland County Klan sent a delegation of seven, headed by Rev. J. F. Strayer, to interview the Imperial Wizard and make a personal protest against the Rich administration. They returned with Evans'



promise to give them an immediate and complete report of the finances of the Realm, to remove Rich from office by the end of the year and to give the next State Klorero the privilege of approving the new Grand Dragon.

This meeting of Evans and the Westmoreland delegation took place on December 20, 1925. When, on January 10, 1926, none of Evans' promises had been fulfilled, Westmoreland County preferred formal written charges against Rich to the National Kloncilium of the Order. In the Bill of Particulars which followed were specified such items as (1) appointment of commissions to take charge of McKeesport Klan No. 7 and Central Klan No. 32 for which the commissioners were never paid; (2) illegal lifting of the charters of Junction City Klan and Central No. 32; (3) refusal to carry out his agreement with Mrs. Knight to pay her for not working under Mrs. Goodwin; (4) employment of A. T. Carlberg and I. F. Heidler without securing the sanction of the Realm Finance Committee; (5) illegally suspending Klansmen Halloway, Reedy, Moore, Dale, Berthold, Wilson and Vial from Keystone State Klan No. 154 as well as of Klansmen Smail and Lopus of Greensburg Klan No. 3 and refusing to give them a trial; (6) directing the kidnapping of a child from his mother; and (7) ordering the brutal treatment of a colored man at the instigation of a white prostitute.<sup>5</sup>

These instances of "dishonesty, misrepresentation, and maladministration" are self-explanatory. In addition, however, the bill of particulars included reference to two commercial ventures of Rich which demand some explanation to be understood. The first of these was the Flowers Product Company. Rich and some of his associates were impressed by the quantities of food, especially of candy, which Klansmen purchased at the various demonstrations and conceived of making a nice profit out of a special Klan brand of candy. It was highly probable these men thought, that the loyalty which Klansmen had for their Order might be developed to include a certain bar of candy, the wrapper of which could be appropriately stamped with Klan symbols. Thus a practically guaranteed market would be secured for this product.

It was with this idea that the Flowers Product Company was organized. It turned out to be a fiasco and Klansmen felt that

Mr. Rich was largely to blame as is shown by the following item quoted from the bill of complaint:

"Mr. Sam D. Rich used Mr. Wallace to sell stock in the Flowers Product Company to Mr. (John G.) Miles with the promise of purchasing all of the one kind of candy the Company could make, and upon this representation Mr. James and Mr. Miles furnished the Company Five Thousand Dollars, but Mr. Rich never purchased any candy from the Company. Later Mr. Rich agreed to take three hundred dollars of the stock, but never paid one cent for the stock, thereby embarrassing these men and perhaps causing a total loss to these associates of Mr. Rich.<sup>5</sup>

Events were to prove that the loss, as anticipated, was "total."

The other commercial enterprise was the Daily Dispatch Publishing Company. At the time of the Carnegie and Scottdale riots in the autumn of 1923,\* Klansmen found considerable difference between the newspaper accounts of those affairs and the accounts given by their Klan leaders. Suggestions came to the Realm office that there was need for a newspaper which would represent the Klan cause "truthfully." It was a time when the emotions of Klansmen were deeply aroused and when the average member, believing that his Order was suffering Jesuitical persecution, was willing to sacrifice much for the Cause. Whether or not the State officers had the welfare of the Order as much in mind as the Klansmen who bought stock in this enterprise can at this time only be surmised, but they acted promptly. Before the end of the year they had incorporated the "Daily Dispatch Publishing Co.," under a charter (Delaware) allowing the issuance of the following capital stock: 300,000 shares of class A common non-voting stock at \$5 par value and 1,000 shares (voting) with no par value. The non-voting stock was immediately hawked among the Klansmen and it is estimated that at least \$90,000 worth of it was sold.<sup>6</sup> The thousand shares which carried the control of the enterprise were naturally not put on the market but kept by the incorporators. Agents were likewise sent out to sell subscriptions to the paper at the rate of \$11.00 for a year's issues or \$20.60 for two years' issues. The enterprise was abandoned after a few months, much to the embarrass-

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\*See ante, p. 52 ff.

ment of the purchasers of its stock who wrote nasty letters to the president of the corporation, George P. Grise, and to the Realm office. When the State Klorero met in December, 1924, the affair had by no means been forgotten and Rich was obliged to refer the matter to a committee which he conveniently filled with men who would not embarrass him. Klansman Heidler who made the committee's report frankly informed the assembled delegates that no relief could be obtained from the Realm and stated the opinion of the committee to be that "the letters which had been sent out demanding payment of the men for stock purchased . . . should be ignored."<sup>7</sup> Rev. W. J. Dempster who could always be trusted to fly to Rich's defense when the occasion demanded and to pay him compliments even when there was no occasion, jumped to his feet "to say a few words."

" . . . Up to the present time, nothing has turned out as we expected. But I know that you are all Klansmen and that it is hard for you to hold malice in your heart for a single instant. Nobody is to blame. We have made no mistake, for I never think that I have made a mistake when things do not turn out the way I expected them to when I went into the thing with the highest of motives. I believe in it (the *Daily Dispatch*) now and will pay my money just as soon as the contract which we entered into has been fulfilled and the paper on the streets. Let us stand together and when we do, we are going to win." (Applause)<sup>8</sup>

The exploited Klansmen had no legal recourse for the money they had spent for stock but the money paid for subscriptions did involve the legal necessity of providing a paper if the subscription price was kept. This technicality was met; the *Daily Dispatch* appeared a few times on the streets and its promoters considered the matter closed. Sam Rich, however, had given this enterprise his blessing and had encouraged the purchase of stock. The consequent moral obligation which he had assumed was less easy to escape than the legal one.

Fortunately, a proposition made by James S. Vance offered a possible way out. Vance edited a scurrilous anti-Catholic journal called *The Fellowship Forum* the staff of which he claimed was "one hundred per cent Klan and Mason." The subscription price of this sheet was \$2.00 a year and Vance offered Rich a fifty per cent commission if he would get subscriptions in job lots.

Calling a meeting of his E. C.'s in Pittsburgh, Rich consoled them with the statement that "The *Daily Dispatch* fizzled because of the human element, not because of crookedness. They (the publishers) admit that a mistake\* was made but say they are going to make good."<sup>9</sup> Rich and Vance explained the proposition of the *Fellowship Forum* to the assembled Exalted Cyclops and, allotting each Klan its quota of subscriptions, urged the officers to push its sale. "Sell to Klansmen, to suspended members, to eligible members. Sell it to every Protestant organization in your community."<sup>10</sup> One dollar of every subscription, Rich promised, would be deposited in a special fund in the Diamond National Bank under his name as trustee and used to repay bona fide stockholders. In regard to the latter, there seemed to be some uncertainty. In some strange way the Company's record of stockholders had been destroyed and Rich explained that it would be necessary for those holding the stock to make affidavit to that fact and file this and their stock certificates in his office.

The plan worked fairly well. Stockholders subscribed to the *Fellowship Forum* and urged others to do so while those who had engineered the plan doubtless complimented themselves for discovering a method to make non-assessable stock at least partially assessable.

With these facts in mind we can now return to the item in the Bill of Complaint against Rich made by the Westmoreland County Klan:

"Mr. Sam D. Rich stated that not one cent of the money earned by subscription on the *Fellowship Forum* would be spent for anything except paying back the men who had subscribed to the *Daily Dispatch* and purchased stock in said *Daily Dispatch*, but Mr. Rich has used this money for other purposes, namely for the 'Lilly Fund,' and it is averred that about Eight Thousand Dollars were collected and about Four Thousand Dollars misappropriated."

While the Westmoreland County leaders were busy gathering evidence and preparing this long list of charges the Klans of Allegheny County were also organizing for action. William Penn

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\*High Klan officials were never specific about this mistake. The impression given to most of the rank and file was that those in charge spent too much for equipment and office space and the funds were soon exhausted in payment of rentals and interest charges. This explanation, however, is open to serious doubt.



Klavern of which Dr. Charles F. Oyer was Exalted Cyclops, took the initiative. This Klavern had a special grievance against Rich who, as King Kleagle, had personally admitted many men to membership in the Order, collected their donations, and then turned them over to William Penn to look after. Every member thus entered upon the rolls of William Penn Klan meant that Rich had pocketed five dollars that otherwise would have gone to their own treasury.

Led by Oyer, an Allegheny County Klans Committee was formed which sent resolutions to the Imperial Wizard demanding that Rich be removed and that the chartered Klans be given an opportunity to elect their own Grand Dragon. When their petitions, like those of the Westmoreland County organization, were treated with "silent contempt," a cooperating group of Klansmen from Allegheny, Westmoreland and neighboring counties, calling themselves the "Non Silba Club," prepared to make an issue of the matter. Acting through a committee of ten, they set February 12, 1926 as the dead line for Rich's removal and, in case Evans continued to remain obstinate, February 27th was announced as the date for a Convention of the chartered Klans at which to select a Grand Dragon and to take any other necessary steps which the situation demanded.

By this time the Wizard was convinced that he must do something for this group seemed determined and was too influential to be summarily banished from the Order. He promised to come to Pittsburgh to meet with them on February 13th. In order to again warn Evans that he would "lose Western Pennsylvania" if he did not suspend Rich and allow him to be brought to trial, Dr. Oyer and four other leaders boarded Evans' train east of Pittsburgh, interrupted a poker game which he was having "with his gang of gunmen that he always carried along with him"<sup>11</sup> and explained the situation. After considerable banging of fists upon tables and protestation by Evans that Rich "was working hard and doing all right" and that he "loved Rich," the visiting committee won their point. At a well attended meeting that night in Duffs College, Rich's resignation was read and the Realm was temporarily placed under the control of the Imperial Department of Realms of which H. K. Ramsey was the ranking administrative officer.

March 9, 1926, was set for Rich's trial. Since no form of tribunal was specified in the Klan Constitution for the trial of a Grand Dragon, Evans appointed three friends of Rich to act as judges: J. C. Orbison, of Indianapolis; A. H. Bell, Grand Dragon of New Jersey; and J. A. Edge, of Lexington, Kentucky. On March 9, Rich was ill with appendicitis and the trial was postponed until April 6. On that date Rich developed bronchial trouble and the trial was again postponed, this time indefinitely. Meanwhile Evans tried hard to silence the demand for the trial. He worked with Dr. Oyer, who, as chairman of the group of co-operating Klansmen, was determined to bring Rich to justice. As Oyer himself graphically described it:

"The Wizard began writing me nice letters, friendly letters with lots of compliments. I had managed the Western Pennsylvania boys so well and all that bull. Zumbrunn, one of Evans' lawyers, wrote that he would make me Grand Dragon of the State if I would see that this matter about Rich was hushed up. I could easily see through all this flattery and finally told Evans I was not after the State office. All I wanted was a decent administration and then our boys would be satisfied.

"Things dragged along without any action. Finally I sent a telegram to the Wizard: *Sam Rich trial must be held or we will take matter to the civil courts.* That scared the Wizard half to death for he immediately telegraphed back setting the date for the trial and asked me to make arrangements for rooms in the William Penn Hotel where it could be held.

"Then, shortly after that I received a letter from Zumbrunn asking me to come to Washington for a secret interview and to let absolutely no one know where I was going. I had come into my office here with a friend of mine and found this letter from Zumbrunn. Since my friend saw it, I let him read what it said. I knew he would keep his mouth shut. He said, 'What are you going to do?' I told him, 'I'm going down.' I didn't let anyone else know but my wife.

"I didn't realize it at the time, but now I'm sure that Evans tried to frame me on that trip. When I got on the Pullman, the berth opposite me was occupied by a pretty girl and she began flirting with me soon after I got on. I didn't think anything about it then, went into the smoker and found two friends of mine who were en route to Florida. We sat and talked in the smoker for a long time and as luck would have it, they had the compartment in front of

mine. When I got off in Washington the next morning, this girl was right beside me but I was talking to my friends and I think she lost her nerve and wouldn't go through with her plan. I remember noticing several men standing around who were doubtless federal agents employed to pick me up. She would likely, if I had been alone, taken my arm and later sworn that I had slept with her that night. That was done by Evans lots of times when he wanted to discredit someone or get rid of someone. After the arrest it would be put up to you to either get out of the Klan or stand trial and usually the person got out of the Klan.

"When I got to Zumbrunn's office he was there with Attorney Brown and one of Evans' gunmen. The first thing they did was to lock the office and then Zumbrunn asked me if anyone knew that I was there. I told him that my wife and this other party knew I was there but that he could be trusted not to talk. I know very well that if it had not been for the fact that these people knew where I was, that I wouldn't be here to tell the tale.

"Zumbrunn made more promises and again offered me the Grand Dragonship if I would call off Rich's trial. I told him, 'Absolutely not!' Then he told me that Evans wanted to see me. I said, 'I'd like to see the old bird too.' So I went up stairs and the first question Evans asked me was, 'How is Sam?' He evidently had a great affection for Sam. He knew that Sam had enough on him that he had to be nice to him. . . ."

The date which Evans chose for the trial of Rich was the day of the primary election, May 18th. It was doubtless chosen in order to make it as difficult as possible for the prosecution. Some of the witnesses, notably Rev. J. F. Strayer, who had led the opposition to Rich in Westmoreland County, could not be present on that date. Klansman Van A. Barrickman acted as prosecuting attorney. Such damaging evidence was presented that even a tribunal of Rich's friends were obliged to recommend his banishment. This recommendation was eventually accepted and on July 22d, he was banished by Imperial decree.

Unfortunately, the removal of Rich did not end the trouble in Western Pennsylvania. A temporary flurry of resentment was created when it was reported that W. L. Robinson, whom Imperial Klazik Ramsey had delegated to take charge of Pennsylvania, was discovered "defiling the state office by immoral relations with his stenographer."<sup>12</sup> This resentment remained temporary

because Robinson was immediately removed and his position given to Spratt, another man from the Atlanta office. The permanent controversy which again brought strife into the Order developed because of the selection and administration of Herbert C. Shaw as Grand Dragon.

In December of 1925, Evans had promised the Westmoreland County leaders that "he would nominate a man for Grand Dragon and that this nomination must be ratified by a majority of all delegates assembled" in the State Klorero and "in case they failed to ratify he would continue to nominate until a man was ratified."<sup>13</sup> The Wizard was under no constitutional necessity to do this\* but apparently he considered it advisable in order to quiet the criticism then rampant in that section.\*\* This promise was not forgotten when the delegates assembled in DuBois for the summer Klorero on August 28th. A large number of the men came determined to elect Dr. Oyer, whose reputation had been enhanced by his leadership in the reform movement against Rich. Evans did not come to the Klorero as he had pledged to do but sent instead his Imperial Klazik, H. K. Ramsey. Ramsey informed the delegates that he had been authorized by the Wizard to nominate Rev. Herbert C. Shaw, a Methodist minister, originally from Tennessee but for some twelve years past "a member in good standing in the Erie Annual Conference" in Pennsylvania.<sup>14</sup> Known for little within the Klan ranks except his radical anti-Romanist views, he received in the first balloting but sixty votes while Dr. Oyer polled one hundred and twenty-four. Ramsey, however, ruled the balloting illegal on the ground that Oyer had not been nominated and that no candidate was eligible unless nominated by the Imperial Wizard. He further refused to make any nomination except Shaw and threatened that "we would take Shaw or there would be no Grand Dragon elected."<sup>15</sup> Some of the delegates withdrew. Others, threatened with the alternative of having Shaw or accepting some out-of-state official like Robinson or Spratt or Colescott, thought it useless to keep up the struggle. Calvin Butler\*\*\* was persuaded to throw the votes of his large Altoona Klan to Shaw. When the second vote

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\*Ante, p. 68-70.

\*\*The Wizard had by proclamation laid down this procedure at the Imperial Klavation in 1924 but there was some doubt as to its permanence.

\*\*\*Dr. Oyer maintained that Ramsey had called Butler up to him and offered him a state job in return for his support of Shaw.



was taken, enough wires had been pulled to secure Shaw's ratification.

The majority of the Klans in the western province, although deciding to accept Shaw's leadership as better than that of Rich, were never uncritical of him. He had been too faithful to Rich to escape suspicion. Shaw, moreover, was entirely lacking in tact and made no effort to conciliate his opponents or to win their loyalty. By February 1927, resolutions were adopted by the "Western Pennsylvania loyal Klansmen" and Evans was notified of the shortcomings of this new Grand Dragon.

Shaw, unlike Rich, had no criminal charges placed against him. The chief criticism of his administration was that of "dividing the Realm into two warring camps" by such things as (1) showing hostility to the Klansmen who had "saved the state from chaos and disgrace when the former acting Grand Dragon brought our noble organization into turmoil within and disrepute without" while showing favoritism to those who had supported the Rich regime; (2) removing the Realm office from Pittsburgh to Harrisburg when the majority of chartered Klans were in Province II; (3) refusing to show a fraternal spirit or to "answer simple questions" relative to such things as the salaries which Great Titans were paid; (4) "forgetting" to circularize the state against the wet William S. Vare when he ran for U. S. Senator; (5) making "unscholarly and undignified utterances" generally and especially for delivering "ranting and inflammatory speeches against Catholics and Negroes."<sup>16</sup>

Forgetting the temper of these Western Pennsylvania Klansmen, the Wizard replied to their communications by mailing to them the banishment decrees of two of their trusted leaders, Van A. Barrickman and John F. Strayer. Given "without notice, trial or hearings" these banishments were immediately labeled "high-handed tyranny" and openly renounced. Several of the Klans passed resolutions "that we will not recognize or respect these banishments by our Imperial Wizard, Hiram W. Evans,"<sup>17</sup> and so informed him.

Barrickman wrote personally to the Wizard to<sup>18</sup> ask him why he "so arrogantly ascribe(d)" to himself "such arbitrary power"

in face of the constitutional provision that "all charges . . . shall be in writing, specifying the acts complained of."\* Informing Evans that he (Barrickman) "was as good a Klansman as you ever dare be," he demanded to know the charges against him and to have a chance to defend himself. When Evans gave no sign of granting this request, Barrickman and Oyer decided to hold the trial in their own klavern and gave notice to the State and National offices that if there were charges or witnesses, they might present them. The trial was held according to schedule and as the presiding officer described it:

" . . . Shaw came in with a gang of gunmen.\*\* I took the chair and proceeded with the trial. Shaw got up and asked for a word and said that he deposed me from office.

" 'Try and put me out of it!' I replied.

"He tried to tell the boys that the trial was illegal. He is a pretty fair talker, too, but the boys were hostile. Finally he got mad and said, 'By the authority vested in me I revoke the charter of William Penn Klan.'

" 'You can say you revoke it all you care to but try and get it.' Nor did he, in spite of the gang he had with him. He tried to get the members of William Penn to leave the trial. 'All those who wish to remain with the Klan and be reinstated will please rise.'

"Nobody got up. He talked some more and asked the same question again. Nobody stood. After some more harangue he asked a third time. Still no response. The fellows were in to fight this thing through.

"I finally went back to the door and told Shaw and his gunmen that if any of them were witnesses against Barrickman, they could remain. All the others could get out and get out quick for the trial would proceed: 'Hurry up, you bunch of hoodlums, get on out . . .'

"We went through with the trial and nobody was there to substantiate the charges on the banishment papers so the jury acquitted the defendant. All this went down on our minutes. We acted constitutionally. Shaw tried to force his will against the By-Laws of the Order."

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\*See ante, p. 75.

\*\*Several Imperial representatives also attended. The affidavit of Cornelius B. Oborn, the Klaliff of William Penn substantiates Oyer's use of the word "gunmen." Oborn states in regard to this trial: "Herbert C. Shaw...brought a bunch of rough-necks into William Penn No. 136...with revolvers and tried to raise a riot...He had one of his rough-necks attempt to throw one of our members then being tried...out of the hall and the loyal members would not stand for such rough conduct..."<sup>19</sup>

During April, May and June the Grand Dragon was faced with open rebellion among the Klans which had opposed his election and had preferred charges against him. He had precipitated this by issuing orders revoking the charters of several Klans which were hostile and by threatening to collect forcibly their property and funds.\*

The Klans at Coraopolis, Manor, New Kensington, Duquesne, Homestead, Vandergrift, Jeannette, Leechburg and Latrobe suffered this fate along with William Penn Klan of Pittsburgh.<sup>20</sup> To add insult to injury, agents were commissioned by Shaw to attempt to re-instate these banished Klansmen at five dollars per man and to accept new applicants at six dollars per man. The members of these Klans, believing that the Grand Dragon was without constitutional authority to revoke charters and determined to resist force by force, continued to meet in their several Klaverns and to plan new ways of resisting Shaw and the national officials who supported him. There was some discussion of instituting quo warranto proceedings against the Order in the civil courts. Several of the leaders held that some of the money which had been paid to the Realm treasury could be recovered by proving that the Order had used funds for ultra vires purposes not specified in the Klan Charter.

Whether or not Imperial Wizard Evans was cognizant of this latter fact, he already had had much to anger him. Having started on a policy of coercion, he now undertook to end this open defiance by a bold legal stroke. He directed suit to be entered in the U. S. District Court of Western Pennsylvania against Barrickman, Oyer and Strayer, their associates—Dr. Charles S. Hunter, of Monessen, and William C. Davis, of Manor—and “all persons similarly situated,” praying the Court for an injunction restraining these persons from the use of the name Ku Klux Klan and demanding \$100,000 in damages for injury they had done to the Order.

Evans had hoped that a damage suit of this size would bring the recalcitrant Klansmen to their knees begging to have it with-

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\*Article 18, section 23 of the Constitution provided that “in the event the charter of a Klan has been revoked or cancelled for any cause whatsoever...all monies of that Klan in the possession of any officer or member thereof shall automatically become the actual monies of the Imperial treasury of this Order and same must be freely and promptly turned over, on demand.”

drawn. Instead they accepted it as a challenge and began raising money to fight the case. They maintained that their banishments had been illegal and that they were still Klansmen in good standing and had a perfect right to use the name of the Order. As an additional defense they prepared a counter-claim in which they declared that the plaintiff Corporation had collected monies for illegal purposes and asked on their part that the Order be restrained from doing further business in the State and that a Trustee be appointed and an accounting made.

Since the rules of a Court of Equity demand that the plaintiff must come "with clean hands" before relief can be obtained, the hearings on this counter-claim were, from the legal point of view, determinative. Stimulated on the one hand by the threat of having to pay \$100,000 in damages and, on the other hand, by the hope of recovering funds from the order, the defendants brought to light as many instances of illegal or quasi-legal acts by the Klan as they could find witnesses to prove. Although revealing the seamy side of the Klan in a somewhat exaggerated way, unrelieved by any instances of commendable action, the Court Records of this case remain the best source material for the secret activities of the Realm organization. The cross-bill itself contained thirty-two items alleging "undue use of funds" and illegal practices. Most of the charges which the critics outside the Order had made against it were now made by the Klansmen themselves. The unconstitutional ways in which Klansmen had been banished and charters revoked and threats made to remove the funds of the local Klans were, of course, included. More important, however, were the allegations that Klan funds had been used to enrich unduly its promoters; to foster "disrespect for government law and order," to spread religious prejudice and "propaganda of bigotry and intolerance"; to "menace political parties" by interfering with elections and by intimidating voters; to "stamp out private schools" and "dictate teaching forces and curricula"; to "interrupt and molest religious services"; to make "threats and intimidations" and to cause "menacing riots of murder, lynching and bloodshed."

Scores of affidavits made by Klansmen were filed in support of these allegations. While many of the statements made were plainly based upon second hand information or even rumor and



were doubtless prompted more by a spirit of retaliation than by one of historical accuracy, many others were made by persons who had themselves taken part in the activity they related or had been eye witnesses of it. Many of these people voluntarily took the witness stand during the hearings on the cross-bill and described the activities in detail.

The most serious charges which were brought against the Order applied to the regime of Sam D. Rich. Testimony was given by those who had participated in the action that, in Pennsylvania, "under the direct authorization of the principal officers of the state," a child had been kidnapped from the home of her grandparents; that a Negro had been hung to a tree by a rope around his neck, kicked and otherwise maltreated; that Klansmen had been given arms, instructed to defend themselves, and ordered to march in direct violation of the orders of the civil authorities with resultant rioting and loss of life, that a despotic rule had been maintained by Klan officials with the aid, in some instances, of special masked, black-robed men who had been used as instruments of terror to threaten, abuse, and on occasion physically maltreat other Klansmen, that there had been much misappropriation of funds; and that behind much of the activity of the leaders was the motive of enriching themselves. In connection with this last charge, Joseph Shoemaker who, as Secretary of the chartered Klans for over eighteen months before which time he had been one of the leading Kleagles in the State, knew most of the State officials well, summed up the financial transactions of the Order by saying: "The provisions of the national charter calling for a benevolent, religious and charitable institution is a joke; it is run entirely for profit."

Rich's administration did not, however, receive all the condemnation. Many affidavits charged Shaw as well with "inflammatory speeches," with "inciting to riot," and with misappropriation of funds, all of which were alienating the membership and destroying the Order. One Exalted Cyclops called him "just a hell-raiser."<sup>21</sup> Two instances when he actually precipitated violence were described<sup>22</sup> and Leechburg Klansmen took the precaution to have him searched for weapons before admitting him into their Klavern.

In reply to the charges against Rich, the Plaintiff, although presenting witnesses who denied most of the allegations, did not have a strong defense. Since a national Tribunal of the Order had acknowledged Rich's participation in the kidnapping and lynching episodes for which he had been banished by the Wizard, to deny this before the civil court was absurd. To prove that Shaw was falsely accused, however, the loyal Exalted Cyclops throughout the state were circularized and asked to sign identical affidavits relative to the activities of the Realm office. Seventy-three Exalted Cyclops from as many different Klans returned the document duly signed and sealed, each swearing that "he was acquainted with Rev. Herbert C. Shaw" and had "heard read numerous bulletins or communications from the Realm or State office of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania in which the membership of this Order have been admonished to respect the law and the duly constituted officers of the law and informed that those of our membership who violated the law would be expelled from the Order for so doing; that the teachings, precepts, and oath of the Order required its members to obey the laws of the land and support the officers of the law in the proper performance of their legal duties and generally to conduct themselves as good citizens."

Such general denials of Klan lawlessness were weak answers to the many specific instances of misconduct which were recited in detail before the Court. Judge W. H. S. Thompson, before whom the hearings were held, had no difficulty in deciding the issue. After reciting some of the more serious violations of the law which had been done at the command of the responsible officers of the Order, he ruled that:

" . . . In view of all the facts disclosed by the evidence, the plaintiff corporation, stigmatized as it is by its unlawful acts and conduct, could hardly hope for judicial assistance in a court of the United States, which is highly commissioned to extend to all litigants before it, without distinction of race, creed, color or condition, those high guarantees of liberty and equality vouchsafed by the constitution of the United States . . .

"This unlawful organization, so destructive of the rights and liberties of the people, has come in vain asking this court of equity for injunctive or other relief. They come with

filthy hands and can get no assistance here. Plaintiff's prayers for relief are denied and the bill is dismissed at the cost of the plaintiff."

The details of the case were given wide publicity in the daily press and had much deadlier effect upon the Klan than the reporting of the Carnegie and Lilly riots had had. Typical of the kindlier editorials was that which appeared in *The Johnstown Democrat*. Although generously and no doubt correctly asserting that "ninety-five per cent of Klan membership was and is made up of men themselves innocent of evil intent" nevertheless "they have been and are the dupes of the higher ups." The *New York World* seized upon the evidence given of Klan wrongdoing and reported it in sensational form as a vindication of its original vigorous opposition to the Order.\* The reporters for the Pittsburgh *Catholic Observer* laughed with unholy glee at this feud among the "Kluckers" which had torn the Order apart and was destroying before their eyes what remained.

During the entire period from the time the damage suit was filed by the Klan in July 1927 to the reading of the decision by Judge Thompson on April 13, 1928, the official organ of the Klan, *The Kourier Magazine*, made no mention of the trial. In the issue of July 1929 an inconspicuous notice was inserted with reference to the appeal which had been taken from Judge Thompson's decision. "In Pennsylvania," reported the *Kourier Magazine*, "a gang of men instigated by the Romanists, are trying to steal the Klan name and insignia. Naturally the Klan is trying to prevent them. In court at Philadelphia, their lawyer declared the Klan was 'the most despotic institution in the U. S. . . .,' and that the Imperial Wizard was 'the chief of organized crime in this country.' Yes sir! He actually did!" Not a word more was told its readers and when the Circuit Court sustained Judge Thompson in his decision, the fact also went unmentioned. *The Fellowship Forum*, under the inconspicuous one column head placed near the bottom of the page, noted that "the case *instituted* by a group of banished Klansmen in Pennsylvania . . . ended abruptly when the court refused the petition of the malcontents and threw the case out." It also printed an official statement of Imperial Wizard Evans evidently written to comfort the Klans-

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\*See ante, p. 21, 23.

men who knew from other sources that the Klan itself had instituted the original suit and had lost its case because it had come to court with the "unclean hands" of a law-breaker. Evans regretted that the court "had impeached the integrity of hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians who were Klansmen" and had refused to allow sufficient time for him "to bring from the remote points, where the crimes were alleged to have been committed, public officers and other men of high repute by whom we would have positively disproved . . . that such occurrences had taken place."

In spite of the fact that this alibi was no doubt accepted by many credulous Klansmen, the case proved a signal defeat for an already greatly discredited leadership,—a leadership which, unfortunately, was not removed. Shaw still remained the Grand Dragon of the Realm. The cross-bill in which the defendants had prayed for an injunction against further operation of the Klan in the State had been disallowed by Judge Thompson because it was not in the jurisdiction of his court to grant it. Hiram W. Evans continued to hold his office of Imperial Wizard although he had been called in the decision "directly responsible for the riot and bloodshed" at Carnegie. Had these matters been brought before the proper courts as the New York *Evening Post* urged, the Order might have suffered further defeat. Some steps were taken to proceed with the quo warranto petition but the difficulty which the defendants had had in financing the first case, the dispute which arose between the Committee of Ten and their chief counsel, Van A. Barrickman, over his remuneration, the dwindling membership of the cooperating Klans, the financial loss sustained by Rev. John F. Strayer in his attempt to sell in printed form a part of the evidence gathered in the trial:—these difficulties influenced the Committee to let the matter drop. Reform had grown both wearisome and expensive.

So, while the Klan still retained the legal right to operate in Pennsylvania and while Shaw still wore his applied dragon insignia, the local Klans in western Pennsylvania rapidly disintegrated. The Order tried to salvage what it could under the provision that the property and funds of disorganized locals belonged to the national organization. In many instances robes and crosses and flags and typewriters were given up to the agents



who came for them. The cases were few where funds were given up. The former officials of the abandoned Scottsdale Klan No. 37 retained enough spirit to get a court order<sup>23</sup> for the restoration of their records and property which had been taken from them.\*

With this trial in Western Pennsylvania, the secessionist movements reached their climax. They had effected both men's and women's Orders and both the eastern and western sections of the state. In the struggle which they made against the maladministration and dictatorship of their higher officers, the participating Klansmen had proved themselves Americans with "the spirit of the Declaration of Independence in their blood" in far more effective fashion than they had while making their ill-considered claims of racial and religious superiority or while repeating the patriotic pledges contained in their rituals.

The close of 1928 found the Realm containing a mere 10,500 members. Nineteen of every twenty who had been Klansmen at the peak of the enrollment in the state had dropped out. Six of every seven who still remained with the Order prior to the Rich trial in 1926 had gone. It is doubtful if the membership would have remained as large as 10,000 during 1928 had it not been for the fact that Catholic Alfred E. Smith was chosen as the Democratic candidate for President of the United States in that year. The State office, with the aid of the *Fellowship Forum*, was able to magnify the danger of his election sufficiently to make Klansmen forget their criticism of the Order in the hope that it would furnish the leadership which they wanted in the anti-Smith fight. The effect which the activities of the Order had upon this election has already been commented upon.\*\* In certain districts the Protestant vote may have been swelled because of the presence of active Klaverns, but throughout most of the State the outcome would doubtless have been the same had the Klan been ordered disbanded in April when Judge Thompson handed down his decision.

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\*The tactics of the National office were interestingly illustrated in this instance. Attorney Lewis C. Walkinshaw who had filed the Writ of Replevin was visited by one of Evans' lawyers, J. H. Connaughton, and a detective who did their best to frighten him. They presented him with an order from the Imperial Wizard saying that he was "without authority to instigate or to prosecute a suit in the Common Pleas Court of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, entitled Knights of the Ku Klux Klan vs. Kelley, et al.," and directing him to "immediately withdraw your appearance" in this "pretended action."

\*\*See ante, p. 110 ff.

With Hoover safely elected, however, the rank and file Klansmen who remained in the Order found little militant work which demanded their attention. It is true that Grand Dragon Shaw began to speak immediately of "the great campaign" to be waged in 1932 and that the editors of the *Kourier Magazine* began to give more and more space to "the menace of communism" in the hope of raising a red scare that would rally Klansmen under the standards of their Order, but the religious and political "crises" had passed. By 1930, the enrollment in the state had dwindled to less than five thousand. Those that remained, for the most part, were residents in the eastern half of the state and found their chief fraternal activity in the initiation of Klansmen into the new *Kwand* degree and in entertaining social activities.

This change in interest from political and religious affairs to social activities was a change which had characterized the history of practically every "crisis organization" which had been established since the founding of the Republic. The secret nativist societies of the eighteen forties and nineties had been preserved as local social clubs after their political activities had ceased. The same was true of non-nativist groups. "The Patriots of America," for instance, a Society which "Coin" Harvey organized as a belligerent free-silver Order, experienced the same transformation.<sup>24</sup> When the free silver issue became politically dead after 1896, the "Patriots of America" did not immediately die but lingered along, the interests of its members changing from silver dollars to linen showers and dances.

By 1931 there were tell-tale items in the Klan press which showed the Klan was undergoing a similar metamorphosis. For instance, one might have expected the Colonel Crawford Klan of Connellsville, during the stormy February evenings of that year, to be engaged in planning a glorious counter attack on the enemies of the nation. But no! Its members were practicing for a minstrel show with which to entertain their friends and incidentally raise a little money for Klan Haven.<sup>25</sup> And York Klan, one of the most loyal in the state: was it organizing Night Riders to quell plotting Catholics and foreigners? Not at all. The York Klan was becoming famous for its "White Rose Male Chorus."<sup>26</sup> And the Klansmen at Hamburg: were they black-listing local enemies? Indeed not. They were growing renowned

for their "goat lunches" which "deutschers" from the Klans of Schuylkill Haven, Allentown, Reading, Catasauqua, Sinking Spring, Schnecksville, Perkasio, Pottsville, Doylestown, and Hummelstown enjoyed on occasion.<sup>27</sup>

It is true that Klansmen sometimes listened to local orators make addresses on "the arch fiend Communism"<sup>28</sup> and to imported talent like Tom Heffin who felt that the Vatican and the Kremlin might both be transferred to America if Americans were not on guard.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, they enjoyed with more frequency, although so common an occurrence was seldom mentioned in the Klan press, speeches like that given by the E. C. of Langhorne Klan when he "entertained the large audience (at Schuylkill Haven) with comic sayings and jokes."<sup>30</sup> Thus, while the high command of the Klan had not yet forgotten its "crusading," most of the rank and file Klansmen had settled down in their arm-chairs "to eat buns and play charades," and wait. . .

Thus by 1930 the leaf and stock of nativism had practically disappeared again; not so its roots. Nativism has shown itself to be a perennial. Another coincidence of critical events, another emotional crisis with strong leaders to raise up old ghosts and thousands of the men and women who enrolled in the Klan will be ready to write another chapter in the story of American nativism. The problem of the relation of church and state has not been solved. A continuation of the present restrictions on immigration will undoubtedly lessen one aspect of the cultural struggle. Economic adjustment with its implications for politics is, however, still painfully difficult, and there is considerable evidence now to show that the economic phases of cultural adjustment will bulk larger in the future history of nativism than in the past. Indeed, they may definitely change much of its vocabulary.

### *References*

1. Testimony of Joseph Shoemaker.
2. Affidavit made by Lemuel Peebles in connection with the Ku Klux Klan vs. Strayer, Case No. 1987, in Equity.
3. Told the writer in an interview by John B. Davis, Klan investigator and service man.
4. Letter of authorization signed by Sam D. Rich, dated April 28, 1924.
5. This Bill of Complaint is reproduced in full in "A Report from the Committee of Ten to Co-operating Klans and Klansmen throughout the State", dated December 31, 1927.

*References*

6. Affidavit of William M. Likens who puts the amount at approximately 100,000. In his book, *"Patriotism Capitalized or Religion Turned into Gold"*, (Uniontown 1925), p. 103, he specifies the amount to be \$90,177.39.
7. Mimeographed Minutes of the Realm Klorero for Sunday, December 7, 1924, p. 21.
8. Ibid. p. 22.
9. Taken from notes made by an Exalted Cyclops while attending this meeting.
10. Ibid.
11. Details furnished by Dr. Charles Oyer in an interview with the writer.
12. Testimony of Joseph Shoemaker, who was in charge of the Pittsburgh office during Robinson's administration. Shoemaker was later removed from this position, presumably because he had reported Robinson's immorality.
13. The Report of the Committee of Ten, etc., p. 1.
14. Affidavit of Klansman Charles E. McKinley.
15. Report of the Committee of Ten, etc.
16. Letter to H. W. Evans under date of February 5, 1927.
17. Quoted from the Resolutions adopted by Vandergrift Klan No. 35, F. T. Cravener, E. C.; sent to Evans under date of March 2, 1927. Among the Klans taking similar action were: Duquesne Klan No. 100; Latrobe Klan No. 46; Homestead Klan No. 54; New Kensington Klan No. 10; Leechburg Klan No. 143; Coraopolis Klan No. 56.
18. Dated February 28, 1927.
19. Told to the writer in an interview by Dr. Charles F. Oyer.
20. Affidavits by the following Exalted Cyclops: Harry M. Hite of Duquesne; Charles E. France, of Leechburg; William G. Ihrig, of New Kensington; Charles Stewart, Jr., of Homestead; Robert B. Patterson, of Coraopolis; and others.
21. Charles E. France.
22. Sworn testimony of William G. Ihrig and Robert Patterson.
23. Order granted by Judge Charles D. Copeland, January 26, 1929. Case No. 1266 before the Court of Common Pleas of Westmoreland County, May term, 1928.
24. *The Independent* (N. Y.) February 12, 1927, p. 180.
25. Printed in *The Kourier Magazine*, the official organ of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, under "Pennsylvania Notes," April, 1931.
26. Ibid. May, 1931.
27. Ibid. June and July issues, 1932.
28. Ibid. February, 1933.
29. Ibid. July, 1931.
30. Ibid. June, 1931.



## CRITICAL ESSAY ON BIBLIOGRAPHY

### SOME BEGINNINGS OF NATIVISM:

For the early nativist movement in the 1830's and 1840's there is little contemporary material available other than highly partisan accounts. The most complete and objective of the studies continues to be that by John H. Lee: *Origin and Progress of the American Party in Politics* (Phila. 1835). S. F. B. Morse was one of the most prolific of the early propagandists of the movement. His *Foreign Conspiracy Against the Liberties of the United States . . .*" (N. Y. 1835) is typical. Much light is thrown on the movement by Peter Guilday: *The Life and Times of John England*, 2 volumes (1927); J. G. Shea: *History of the Catholic Church in the United States* (N. Y. 1890). Brief articles of importance are: James Boyd: *The Irish in America* (No. American Rev. Jan. 1841, 52/191) O. S. Straus: *Religious Liberty in the U. S.* (N. Y. 1896).

For the Know Nothing movement, Louis D. Scisco: *Political Nativism in New York* (N. Y. 1901) is the best general account. It is not limited to a single state as the title suggests. The sketch by H. J. Desmond: *The Know Nothing Party* (N. Y. 1904) has some value. Two valuable regional studies are the monographs by L. F. Schmeckebier: *The Know Nothing Party in Maryland* (Johns Hopkins Univ. Studies in History and Political Science, vol. 17, 1899) and by George H. Haynes: *The Causes of Know Nothing Success* (Am. Hist. Rev. iii/67, Oct. 1897). The partisan feeling of the time is revealed in such works as *The Sons of the Sires, a History of the Rise, Progress, and Destiny of the American Party* (Phila. 1855), *An Appeal to Workingmen* (Washington, 1856), W. S. Balch: *Romanism and Republicanism Incompatible* (N. Y. 1852), E. Hutchinson: *Young Sam, or Native Americans' Own Book* (N. Y. 1855), J. W. Laurens: *The Crisis, or the Enemies of America Unmasked* (Phila. 1855), T. R. Whitney: *A Defense of the American Party* (N. Y. 1856). Brief summaries of the movement are contained in such works as J. B. McMaster: *A History of the*

*People of the United States* (N. Y. 1919) vol. viii, p. 82-86, 211-214, 228-229 and his *The Riotous Career of the Know Nothings* (Form 17/524 Jl. 1894); T. C. Smith: *Parties and Slavery* (American Nation Series, vol. 18, N. Y. 1906); W. F. Hewitt *The Know Nothing Party in Pennsylvania* (Pennsylvania History, vol. ii, April 1935).

The standard work on the American Protective Association is J. H. Desmond: *The A. P. A. Movement* (Wash. 1912). A critical account of the genesis of the movement appears in J. J. Tighe: *The A. P. A., Its Origin and Growth* (N. Y. 1894) and P. H. Winston: *The American Catholics and the A. P. A.* (1895). Typical of the A.P.A periodicals is *The A. P. A. Magazine* (San Francisco, 1895-1897). The *School Question* is illuminatingly discussed in G. M. Grant: *Religious Instruction in State Schools* (Edu. Rev. 3/40 Jan. 1892); I. A. Mooney: *The Catholic's Controversy about Education* (Edu. Rev. 3/237 Mar. 1892); Thomas Bouquillon: *A Reply to Mooney* (Edu. Rev. 3/365 Ap. 1892); C. B. Pallen: *The Catholics and the Public Schools* (Edu. Rev. Dec. 1892); W. M. West: *Those Faribault Schools* (Christian Union, 46/782, Oct. 29, 1892). Important articles on other phases of the movement include W. C. Doane: *Hostility to Catholics* (No. Amer. Rev. 158/573 May 1894); W. J. H. Traynor: *The Policy and Power of the A. P. A.* (No. Amer. Rev. 162/659 June 1896); F. R. Coudert: *The American Protective Association* (Forum 17/513 July 1894).

#### THE REVIVAL OF THE KU KLUX KLAN AND ITS SPREAD INTO PENNSYLVANIA:

The literature relative to the recent Ku Klux Klan is enormous. The best early bibliographies were those prepared by the U. S. Library of Congress, Division of Bibliography: No. 533 (1921), No. 738 (1923) and No. 846 (1924). Julia E. Johnson: *The Ku Klux Klan* (The Reference Shelf, i/no. 10, N. Y. 1923) contains a selected bibliography. M. L. Barchelder compiled a useful *Digest of Laws of Various States Relating to the Ku Klux Klan* (N. Y. State Library Ass'n, Albany 1923).

The official organs of the Order were *The Standard* (N. Y.) and various state editions of *The Fiery Cross* (1923-1925). Although Ohio, New Jersey, Indiana, and West Virginia had

separate editions, no Pennsylvania edition was published. *The Fiery Cross* was absorbed by *The National Kourier* which was published in regional editions such as the North Atlantic edition, the Eastern and Middle edition, etc. At the Atlanta office was published *The Imperial Knight Hawk* (1923-1924) which was continued as *The Kourier Magazine* (Dec. 1924 to date). In Pennsylvania there was the very temporary *Keystone American* (1924) and an attempt was made to publish *The Pittsburgh Daily Dispatch*. Not owned but heartily endorsed by the Klan was the anti-Catholic *Fellowship Forum* (Washington, D. C.), undoubtedly the most influential periodical which was circulated among Pennsylvania Klansmen with official sanction.

Among the documentary materials are such important items as the *Charter of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan* granted by the Superior Court of Fulton County, Georgia; *The Constitution and Laws of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc.* (Atlanta 1921, 1926); W. J. Simmons: *Imperial Instructions, Document No. I* (Atlanta 1918); *The Kloran or White Book* (Atlanta 1916); *The Minutes of the Imperial Kloncilium, May 1 and 2, 1923* (Atlanta, 1923) containing copies of the litigation instituted by W. J. Simmons against H. W. Evans and the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan; *Papers Read at the First Annual Meeting of the Grand Dragons* (Atlanta, 1923); *The Proceedings of Imperial Klonvokations*, not all of which were published as were *The Proceedings of the Second Imperial Klonvokation at Kansas City, Missouri* (N. P., 1924); *Klansman's Manual* (1924) compiled and issued under the direction of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. An indispensable source for the early history of the movement in the South is *The Ku Klux Klan, Hearings before the Rules Committee of the House of Representatives, 67th Congress, First Session* (Washington, 1921).

The "Minutes" of the various Realm Kloreros in Pennsylvania were sometimes mimeographed (often in abridged or deleted form) and circulated among the local Klans. The files of the Pennsylvania Realm Office are neither complete nor available to non-members of the Order. The personal files of Van A. Barrickman, Esq., of Pittsburgh, John F. Strayer of McKeesport, A. L. Cotton of West View, and of Lemuel Peebles of Kittanning are as complete, perhaps, as those possessed by any individuals

in western Pennsylvania. Dayton Laubach and William G. Seemiller, both of Philadelphia, have important personal collections of material. Most of the official correspondence, the minutes of meetings and literature sent from the state or national headquarters for distribution which was once in the possession of former Kligrapps (secretaries) of local Klaverns has not been preserved. When the Order was discredited, much of this material was considered to be dangerously implicating and was destroyed. Some was collected by state officials. What disposition they made of it is not known by this writer. Court records of the litigation growing out of the Carnegie and Lilly riots are available at Pittsburgh and Ebensburg. Most important of all Klan suits was Case No. 1897 in Equity in the U. S. District Court for Western Pennsylvania (1927-1928), the files of which are available in the Post Office Building at Pittsburgh.

Numerous general studies of the Ku Klux Klan have been published. Among the best balanced are Stanley Frost: *The Challenge of the Klan* (Indianapolis, 1924) and John M. Mecklin: *The Ku Klux Klan, a Study of the American Mind* (N. Y. 1924). Of somewhat less value is Henry P. Fry: *The Modern Ku Klux Klan* (Boston 1922). A scholarly evaluation of the movement as a phenomenon in American culture appears in Horace M. Kallen: *Culture and Democracy in the United States* (N. Y. 1924, p. 9-43). Reuben Maury: *The Wars of the Godly* (N. Y. 1928) and F. Tannenbaum: *Darker Phases of the South* (N. Y. 1924) treat the Klan critically but with considerable perspective.

A list of selected readings from current periodicals and pamphlets has been compiled by Julia E. Johnson: *The Ku Klux Klan* (The Reference Shelf, i/no. 10, N. Y. 1923). Attempts to explain certain phases of the movement are made by F. Tannenbaum: *The Ku Klux Klan, its Social Origin in the South* (Century 105/873 Ap. 1923) and Frank Bohn: *The Ku Klux Klan Interpreted* (Amer. Jour. of Sociology 30/385, 1925). The Americanism of the Klan is competently debated in *Is the Ku Klux Klan unAmerican, Pro and Con* (Forum 75/305 Feb. 1926); W. R. Pattangall: *Is the Ku Klux Klan un-American?* (Forum 74/321 S '25); H. W. Evans: *The Klan, Defender of*



*Americanism* (Forum 74/801 D '25) ; H. W. Evans: *The Klan's Fight for Americanism* (No. Amer. Rev. 223/33 Mar. '26).

The early days of the Klan in Pennsylvania are briefly described in a short manuscript by Van A. Barrickman found in the personal papers of Rev. J. F. Strayer. Statistical information relative to the membership of local Klans is scattered through the affidavits and testimony made in connection with the Klan suit No. 1897 in Equity mentioned above.

#### THE KLAN CHANGES HANDS:

For the ousting of Simmons from the control of the Klan see *Depositions* of William J. Simmons and of D. C. Stephenson filed as evidence in the Klan suit No. 1897 in Equity. These depositions are reproduced in abridged form in *Behind the White Mask of the Ku Klux Klan* (Scottsdale, 1928) compiled by J. F. Strayer, C. S. Hunter and W. C. Davis. See also W. J. Simmons: *The Klan Unmasked* (Atlanta, 1923) and *America's Menace* (Atlanta, 1926). The litigation which followed the ousting of Simmons is reproduced together with a discussion between the Evans and Simmons factions within the national executive council in *The Minutes of the Imperial Kloncilium of May 1 and 2, 1923* (Atlanta, 1923).

The hearings subsequent to the murder of Thomas Abbott are printed in *The Martyred Klansman* (no author, Pgh. 1923). The evidence submitted in the trial of Patrick McDermott for the murder of Abbott is available in the Allegheny County Building, Pittsburgh. The evidence submitted in the trial of the rioters at Lilly is available in the Court House at Ebensburg.

#### THE ORGANIZATION OF THE KLAN:

Copies of *The Constitution and Laws of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan* (Atlanta, 1921) were widely distributed and are generally available. Slightly revised *The Constitution* . . . was published again (Atlanta, 1926) and since that time minor amendments—chiefly strengthening the executive power—have been passed in the national Klonvocations. *The Kourier* magazine does not reproduce these amendments and one must go to *The Proceedings* . . . of the Klonvocations in question to find them. Important interpretations of the *Klan Constitution and Laws* . . .

given by national officials are reported in the *Minutes of the (Penna.) State Klorero, December 6, 1924* (mimeographed). The government of the military branch of the Order is set forth in *The Constitution of the Klavaliers of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of the State of Pennsylvania*. A few of the *General Orders* of the Klavalier Commander-in-Chief are available in private collections. Lemuel Peebles (sometimes written Peoples) of New Kensington and Otto Guilden have important papers in their possession relative to the Klavaliers.

Regarding the practical administration of the Klan in Pennsylvania, there is much valuable testimony filed in connection with the Klan suit No. 1897 in Equity. Especially important is the testimony of Joseph Shoemaker, organizer and for a time officer in charge of Chartered Klans in the Realm, Grand Dragon Herbert C. Shaw, Lemuel Peebles, one of the early organizers of the Realm, Roy Barclay and John B. Davis, investigators or G-men, and dozens of Exalted Cyclops of local Klaverns.

#### FRATERNALISM:

*The Oath of Allegiance* and *The Ku Klux Klan Creed* contain typical statements of the self-sacrificing clannishness which the founder of the Order hoped to inculcate in its members. The expression of this fraternalism in local Klaverns through committee activities is outlined in *The Klan in Action* (Pamphlet F-102, no date). Social activities which became a feature of the "Demonstrations," "field meets" and picnics of the Order are evidenced in the hand-bills and posters used to advertise these affairs and in the printed programs which were prepared in some cases. Considerable space is given to the social activities of Pennsylvania Klansmen in *The Kourier Magazine* under Pennsylvania Notes. Circular letters mailed periodically from Grand Dragon Shaw's office contain many references to demonstrations and social gatherings which were given official approval. Record of the charitable activities of local Klaverns was sometimes kept by the Kligruffs and after 1925 appeared in the Klavern minutes as the reports of Welfare Committees. Donations to the Lilly and Abbott funds were often reported in *The Kourier Magazine*. Information regarding the administration of these funds occurs in the Transcript of Testimony, Case 1897 in Equity and in the

*Minutes of the State Klorero, December 7, 1924* (mimeographed). The Klan Haven Association is discussed in the Mary I. Goodwin-Van A. Barrickman correspondence of February 1928 (Private Papers of J. F. Strayer).

#### POLITICAL ACTIVITIES:

Of all the activities of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan there are none concerning which there is less documentary evidence than those in the field of local politics. Secrecy was most carefully observed here. Some anonymous cards are preserved entitled *The People's Choice*, others with the heading *Vote for Candidates Endorsed by the Patriotic League . . .* which contained lists of candidates approved by local Klans in secret konklave. The "Counter Claim" filed by the defendants in the Klan suit No. 1897 in Equity contains charges against the Order for un-American political practices but little evidence was submitted during the trial in substantiation of these political charges. The personal testimony of former Klansmen is almost the only source of information on local political action. There was, of course, no attempt to cover up Klan opposition to Catholic candidates or to political activities by Catholic clergy. On this point the Klan attitude is summarized by Imperial Wizard Evans: *The Catholic Question as Viewed by the Ku Klux Klan* (Current Hist. 26/563 July 1927). The Klan's political strength was estimated by Evans: *Ballots Behind the Ku Klux Klan* (*Worlds Work* 55/243 Jan. 1928). The best account of the Klan's anti-Catholic political activities appears in Michael Williams: *The Shadow of the Pope* (N. Y. 1932). This work is well documented and is especially good for the 1924 and 1928 campaigns against Alfred E. Smith. Little of the material used in this work, however, is drawn from the Pennsylvania Realm. For the Klan's political activities in this state, of special importance are the addresses of Grand Dragon Rich and Imperial Wizard Evans delivered at Conneaut Lake and reported in the *Pittsburgh Gazette Times* of October 7, 1924; a mimeographed communication from the Realm Office entitled *The Klan and the Roman Hierarchy* (June 16, 1927); two folders distributed by Realm officials: *The Ku Klux Klan Discloses its Position on the Presidency* (1927) and *Why the Ku Klux Klan Opposed the World Court* (1927); and the

mimeographed catechisms: *A Presidential Meeting* and *The Mexican Question*. Detailed election returns for the presidential elections of 1924 and 1928 are available in *Pennsylvania State Manual*, 1925-1926 and *Pennsylvania Manual*, 1929. The texts of the Klan Bills, Nos. 1022-1025 inclusive, introduced during the 1927 session of the Assembly are available in the Library of the Senate at Harrisburg.

#### RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES:

For the religious tone of the national and state conventions of the Klan the "Proceedings" and "Minutes" of Klonvocations and Kloreros are valuable. The religious elements in the initiations and ritual are set forth in *The Kloran or White Book* (1916). There was also an official *Klan Funeral Service* (mimeographed). Church visitations and donations were usually reported in the local press. The Belleview visitation received national publicity (*Literary Digest*, May 5, 1923). For Klan hymnology the collection of hymns and songs edited by Rev. P. S. Wight: *American Hymns* (Buffalo, no date) is typical. Much of the more popular Klan music was recorded and purchasable as Victrola records.

Discussion of the general religious issues between the Klan and various religious groups is contained in: George S. Clason: *Catholic, Jew, Ku Klux Klan: What they believe—where they conflict* (Chicago, 1924); W. E. Garrison: *Catholicism and the American Mind* (Chicago, 1928); Thomas M. Conroy: *The Ku Klux Klan and the American Clergy* (*Ecclesiastical Rev.* 70/47 Jan. 1924); H. W. Evans: *The Klan of Tomorrow and The Klan Spiritual* (Kan. City 1924); *Protestants Disowning the Ku Klux* (*Literary Digest* 75/33 Nov. 25, 1922).

#### THE KLAN AND THE SCHOOLS:

The Klan position regarding education is stated by H. W. Evans: *The Public School Problem in America* (1924) and by an official Klan pamphlet entitled *The Obligation of American Citizens to Free Public Schools* (no date). The Catholic point of view is adequately revealed in J. A. Burns: *Catholic Education* (N. Y., 1917) and in P. J. McCormick: *History of Education* (Washington, 1915). The Klan's arguments against what they called un-American text-books were largely taken from the



pamphlets of C. G. Miller, one of W. R. Hearst's devotees who expanded his findings and published them later under the title *The Poisoned Loving-Cup* (Chicago, 1928).

#### THE WOMEN OF THE KU KLUX KLAN

For the organization of the women's Order and its relation to the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan see *Proceedings of the Second Imperial Klonzokation, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan* (1924) p. 110-130. The organization of the women's Order is set forth in *The Constitution and Laws of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan* (1923). The private files of the former Excellent Commander, Mrs. Mary I. Goodwin (Birmingham, Alabama) are the richest private source for the history of the Order during its first four years in Pennsylvania. Among the private papers of Rev. John F. Strayer of McKeesport are copies of many of the documents in Mrs. Goodwin's possession. The Goodwin-Barrickman correspondence is rich in material. Irregular *Bulletins of the Meetings of Klan Haven Association* were issued. Especially important is that dated April 22, 1927. Also valuable are the letters by Imperial Representative Martha Turnley addressed to all Klanswomen under dates of February 21 and August 1, 1927. Considerable data of unequal worth appears in the evidence submitted in connection with the Klan suit No. 1897 in Equity. Among the more important items in these records are the Deposition of Imperial Commander Robbie Gill Comer and the affidavits filed by Cora V. Brubaker, Cecelia Sacrey and Mary I. King.

#### THE DECLINE OF THE KU KLUX KLAN IN PENNSYLVANIA

Apparently authentic statistics of Klan membership by states appeared in the *Washington Post* for November 2, 1930, Section I, pages 1 and 14. While no source for the statistics is given, Klan officials to whom the writer has submitted the statistics of Klan membership in Pennsylvania have judged them accurate. For the controversy within Philadelphia County over P. M. Winter's leadership, the private files of Dayton Laubach and of William G. Seemiller are most important sources of information. P. M. Winter has stated his own point of view in *What Price Tolerance* (Washington, 1928). The Transcript of

Testimony, Case 1897 in Equity contains considerable testimony relative to the Black Robed Gang of Philadelphia.

For the open hostility in western Pennsylvania over the administration of Sam D. Rich, the best printed collection of documents and correspondence for the years 1926 and 1927 is *The Decline of the Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania* (No place, December 31, 1927) compiled by J. F. Strayer, C. S. Hunter and W. C. Davis as a *Report of the Committee of Ten to Cooperating Klansmen* (sub*title*). The Court Records of Case 1897 in Equity include scores of affidavits, many exhibits, two folio volumes of testimony and lengthy depositions by W. J. Simmons, D. C. Stephenson and Robbie Gill Comer. Long excerpts from the depositions of Simmons and Stephenson together with some of the testimony regarding the Black Robed Gang and the Decision of Judge Thompson are reproduced under title of *Behind the White Mask of the Ku Klux Klan* (237 pages, Scottdale, 1928). This was compiled by Strayer, Hunter, and Davis as a second *Report of the Committee of Ten to Cooperating Klansmen*.

One of the chief organizers and state officials prior to 1926 who incidentally took no part in the Klan trial, namely, A. L. Cotton, had in his possession (1933)—so he said—the membership rolls of the Realm and other valuable documentary materials but refused to allow this writer any access to them.

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