House Panel Report Says Klan Is Still a Terrorist Conspiracy

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 10—The House Committee on Un-American Activities made public today its final report on an investigation of the Ku Klux Klan that began three years ago.

The report is a low-keyed accounting of the history and horrors of America's most durable terrorist movement, which began after the Civil War. It is 371 pages long.

The committee's final judgment, delayed a year and a half after the end of its hearings, was stern. Today's Klans, like those of the past, operate as "conspiracies to deprive certain citizens of rights guaranteed by the Constitution," it concluded.

"Klans moreover have continued to rely on terrorism as an instrument for achieving so-called 'white supremacy' and other objectives," the committee declared in the summary of its report.

"This terrorism runs the gamut from telephoned threats or intimidatory cross-burnings to various forms of physical violence," it continued. "Klan involvement in kidnappings and beatings, arson, bombing and outright murder in recent years compels the committee to view a Klan as a vehicle for death, destruction and fear."

Donald Appell, the committee's chief investigator, said the final report had been delayed because of the committee's limited staff and because of the press of other work, such as an investigation into urban rioting.

The report added little beyond the information disclosed in the committee's public hearings between Oct. 19, 1965, and Feb. 24, 1966.

The committee raised its estimate of the number of members in the nation's 14 Klan organizations from 15,000 in October, 1966, to 16,810 in January, 1967.

It credits the United Klans of America, Inc., with 15,075, or about 90 per cent, of those members. The United Klans is headed by Robert Shelton of Tuscaloosa, Ala. Shelton, the Imperial Wizard, was sentenced to a year in prison and fined $1,000 for contempt of Congress on Oct. 14, 1966, for refusing to produce subpoenaed Klan records for the committee.

The United Klans' membership ranged from 10 persons in Delaware to 7,500 in North Carolina in early 1967, the committee reported.

Representative Edwin E. Willis, Democrat of Louisiana, who is chairman of the committee, noted in a foreword to the report that he had twice introduced a bill aimed at curbing Klan activities, once in 1966 and again this year.

The committee report accused the Klans of exploiting a fear of communism to advance their own goals of white supremacy.

"The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, then conducting voter registration drives, was unjustly accused by the Klan of being a Communist organization," the report said, "and the public was told to beware of the Congress of Industrial Organizations on the grounds that the C.I.O. was 'teaching and practicing communism' by trying to place white workers on a level with the Negroes."