

The Klan: Its Growing Influence

**Membership Placed
at 10,000 in South
—Leaders Vocal**

By JOHN HERBERS
Special to The New York Times

ATLANTA, April 17—In a cow pasture outside Jacksonville, Fla., a few nights ago, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan erected two wooden crosses with a crude dummy attached to each. One was labeled LBJ, for the President; the other MLK, for the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The crosses were set afire. As the flames consumed them a leader took out a pistol and fired bullets through the effigies.

Somewhere in Mississippi, the "cabinet" of a statewide Klan organization opened a secret meeting with talks about Sunday school activities, then shifted casually, and with little change in tone, into a discussion about whether to continue the moratorium on bombings.

In Hamburg, Ark., six men in pointed black hoods and masks resembling the uniform of a medieval executioner stood guard at a Klan meeting. One threatened a policeman for recording the license number of automobiles at the rally. Others made off with the automobile of the cameraman who had taken "unauthorized" pictures of Klansmen. An imperial wizard from Monroe, La., identified the force of masked men as "our political action committee."

Leaflets signed "The White Caps" were distributed under cover of darkness in Natchez, Miss., and in Ferriday, La., accusing local citizens, by name, with offenses ranging from homosexuality to cohabitation with Negroes.

These are some of the recent manifestations of the "invisible empire" of the Ku Klux Klan, an elusive, ever-changing but persistent phenomenon of the American scene for a century.

From the North Carolina coastal plain to the pine barrens of Louisiana, the Klan and allied organizations are now more active, and possibly stronger in numbers and influence than at any time since the klan's heyday of the nineteen twenties.

Klan revival has been under way off and on for a decade, but it reached a new peak in recent months as a response to passage and enforcement of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and to the abandonment of the policy of massive resistance by the authorities in hard-core areas.



The New York Times (by Claude Sitton)

Cross-burning held in a vacant field north of Tuscaloosa, Ala., before admission of two Negroes to state university.

Terrorist activity believed to have been inspired and carried out by klan groups became such a disruptive force that President Johnson publicly condemned the organization and the House Un-American Activities Committee voted to start an investigation.

Of 16 widely publicized racial murders in the South from Sept. 15, 1963, klan members have been implicated to some degree in 11 of them. In none of the 11, however, has there been a felony conviction.

Federal and state authorities believe that klansmen were responsible for many of the unsolved beatings, bombings, arson and other forms of violence that occurred in the South. Several communities—St. Augustine, Fla., McComb, Miss., Bogalusa, La., among others—were gripped for months by klan terror.

A New York Times survey of the South and of Federal and state authorities concerned with the problem showed that the "invisible empire" today is composed of about 10,000 active members of a dozen distinct klan organizations; several thousand others in allied or front groups such as gun clubs or the National States Rights party in Birmingham, Ala.; and a host of sympathizers who give the activities aid, comfort and protection.

Grand Dragon Boasts

Authorities agree with Klan leaders that the number, so long as it remains a small fraction of the population, is not as important as what a handful of Klansmen can do.

"I can take five men in a city of 25,000," said Calvin F. Craig, the Georgia Grand Dragon of the United Klans, "and that is just like having an army. That five can almost control the political atmosphere of that city."

On the other hand, some Klan groups have become little more than fraternal organizations. An official said the 500-member Association of South Carolina Klan with headquarters in West Columbia "is sort of like a supper club."

"They just meet to eat once in a while," he said.

A Klansman driving through a city sees a policeman on a corner and executes one of the various Klan salutes. If the officer responds in kind, the Klansman knows he is in friendly territory.

The Confederate flag—whether worn on the helmet of an Alabama state trooper or displayed on the automobile bumper of a United States marshal, as it has been in Mississippi—means one thing to the Klansman: Here is a friend of "the cause."

A sheriff who is disinterested in investigating burning of churches or dynamiting of

houses in his county may be a Klan member or sympathizer. The Federal Bureau of Investigation believes that at least 30 sheriffs, policemen and state highway patrolmen belonged to the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of Mississippi before Gov. Paul B. Johnson and some cities took steps to purge them.

All these people share one goal. As stated by William Pierce Randal in a new book, "The Ku Klux Klan," the goal is "to preserve the right of a minority [white Anglo-Saxon Protestant] to declare itself superior to the rest of the population and to define true Americanism in terms of its own special traits, traditions and interests."

New Aspects of Klan

Some Southern liberals in recent years have refused to take the Klan seriously. With rare exceptions, the Klansman has no economic or social standing in his community. Most who appear at the rallies are portraits in despair. Negroes laugh at them in their sheets and robes.

There are, however, some new aspects of the Klan of the 1960's, in addition to the violence it has spawned, that many find disturbing.

The old Klan leaders who operated the klans for personal profit have been replaced by humorless young men, in their 30's or early 40's, who are deadly serious about their cause. They have emphasized, but in no sense eliminated, hatred of Jews, Roman Catholics and Negroes, and they have taken a more prominent role in the complex of right-wing organizations concerned with stopping alleged subversion.

"We work closely with the John Birch Society and similar groups," said Robert M. Shelton Jr., the 36-year-old Imperial Wizard of the United Klans of America.

Another high Klan leader was asked what he thought would be the ultimate solution to what he called the "Communist takeover in Washington."

"A coup," he said without hesitation. "We need to put somebody else in charge for a while. It might take a bloody revolution."

The Klan of the 1950's built on the remnants of the revival of the 1920's, was concentrated chiefly in a handful of cities and in the Piedmont of Alabama, Georgia and the Carolinas. In the last two years, Klan society has declined in these areas.

It has expanded with a sudden force in the Black Belt, a band of dark soil extending from Virginia to Texas. Although the Black Belt has the greatest concentration of Negroes and the most fervid opposition to desegregation, it had not seen Klan activity as significant in 40 years.

The rural Black Belt was the last to feel the effect of the Negro revolution. When desegregation became imminent, however, Klan organization found fertile fields in the plantation country.

In North Carolina, the Grand Dragon of the United Klans of America, J. Robert Jones, lives in Salisbury, a Piedmont city. But the 36-year-old former sailor, bricklayer and lightning rod

salesman had his greatest success in the flat farm area around Rocky Mount.

"That area is now a hotbed of klaverns," a law-enforcement officer said. "And although they are not violent, it is significant that just a few days ago the Craven County grand jury indicted the Exalted Cyclops of New Bern and two other men or a charge of setting off dynamite outside a church while a civil rights rally was under way."

But it is Mississippi, which until 1963 had seen little organized Klan activity since Reconstruction, that now has the most violent, the most secretive and the second-largest Klan in the nation.

Meetings Are Secret

The White Knights have an estimated total of 2,000 members—all within the state, in accordance with the Mississippi concept of state sovereignty. Meetings are held with such secrecy and security—at one rally two planes circled overhead and kept radio contact with guards on the ground—that the only information about the organization comes from informers who have infiltrated its ranks and from literature distributed by airplane and automobile.

Its Imperial Wizard is a 39-year-old bachelor who operates a small business in Laurel and publicly disclaims any connection with the organization. The Grand Dragon, No. 2 man, is a former sheriff who lives in the Crystal Springs area, south of Jackson.

The White Knights were part of the original Knights of the Klu Klux Klan, a Louisiana organization, until February of 1964, when they split and formed their own group. As the state fearfully prepared for an influx of civil rights workers, the White Knights expanded rapidly, taking in white Protestant males for a \$10 initiation fee and \$10 more for a white robe and hood. About 60 klaverns were established.

According to authoritative sources, the White Knights were responsible for at least five murders and scores of bombings, church burnings and beatings in the state last spring, summer and fall.

Last Nov. 15 more than 300 Klan leaders held a statewide "Klonvocation" in a Simpson County forest and invoked a 90-day moratorium on the more drastic forms of violence. F.B.I. sources said this was the result of increasing pressure on the organization by the authorities.

There has since been a lessening of violence and the moratorium has apparently been extended. "The cabinet [composed of the organization] meets every once in a while and discusses it," a law-enforcement officer said a few days ago. "We don't know what they will do with the summer coming on."

Open Letter to Johnson

The membership drive, the officer said, has leveled off. "They are suspicious of taking in new members because of the F.B.I.," he said. "But there hasn't been a decline, either." "The White Knights of the Klan Ledger, a mimeographed

newsletter distributed to homes in several areas of the state, was in the form of an open letter to President Johnson.

The White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan is sovereign to Mississippi as regard to work and administration of the invisible empire," the paper said. "We are spiritually connected with our Klan brethren in our sister state of Alabama through Christ, Our Lord and Saviour."

"Possibly some of our brother Klansmen are impetuous and short-tempered," it said in reference to the arrest of four members of the United Klan in the fatal shooting of Mrs. Viola Gregg Liuzzo in Selma, Ala., last month. Then it continued, telling Mr. Johnson:

"Some of them may occasionally engage in rash actions as a consequence of their being goaded by Communists who are protected by your unlawful decrees, but, in spite of their shortcomings, we will still choose to stand by our Christian American patrols of the Klan—sinners though they may be—rather than to leave them and join your secret society of sex perverts and atheistic murderers."

The Original Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, which has about 1,000 members in northern Louisiana and along the Mississippi border, has announced that it now accepts Roman Catholic members.

Communists Berated

Houston P. Morris, a former mill superintendent and the new Imperial Wizard, of Monroe, appeared at a Klan rally in Hamburg, Ark., just across the Louisiana line, and told reporters: "The culprits are not the Negroes but the Communists. Our purpose is to preserve Christianity and keep the Communists from taking over. We now have Catholic members."

Mr. Morris, a man of about 30, said he was devoting full time to the Klan.

A law-enforcement officer familiar with the Original Knights was asked why Royal V. Young, the former Imperial Wizard, had stepped down.

"Oh, he decided to go off to Dallas on some kind of right-wing venture with Gen. [Edwin A.] Walker," the officer replied.

Most Klansmen are in the lower income and education brackets. They are factory workers, mechanics, route salesmen and small businessmen. But the United Klans of America, Inc., Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, which has an estimated total of 5,000 members and operates throughout the South, has been reaching for middle-class respectability.

Several hundred Klan leaders from eight states and their wives recently attended a dinner in the ballroom of the Dinkler-Tutwiler Hotel in Birmingham, registered as the American Rescue Service. The women wore evening gowns.

Matt Murphy, the United Klan's Imperial Counsel, comes from an aristocratic Southern family. Leroy Percy, a Greenville, Miss., banker and planner who has been a voice of moderation on the race question, is a cousin.

Mr. Murphy is a tall, heavy-set man with gray wavy hair and deep lines in his face. He

is alternately amiable and brooding. He showed a visitor a copy of a letter from another cousin pleading with him to abandon the Klan.

According to Mr. Murphy, the root of this country's problem is the Federal Reserve Act that was passed in the Woodrow Wilson Administration. This, he said, turned monetary control over to a group of "international Jew Zionists" who financed the Russian Revolution and are in the process of bringing about Communism in this country.

During the interview in his Birmingham office, Mr. Murphy produced a worn book with a red cover. It was entitled "The Negro, A Beast" and the thrust of its many chapters was that "the Bible and Divine revelation, as well as reason, all teach that the Negro is not human."

One illustration showed a white woman being ravished by a Negro man. There was no author or publisher listed.

"This is the only copy in existence," Mr. Murphy said. "It was written during the Reconstruction when it wasn't safe for the author to be known. I'm thinking of having it reprinted for distribution."

The United Klan's Grand Dragon for Alabama is a tall, erect man of 35. He says the majority of the people in his state are against "niggerism, Catholicism, Judaism and all the isms of the whole world." He also is president of Local 359 of the International Association of Machinists.

Claims Union Members

"Most Klansmen are union members," he said in an interview. "I see McDonald [David J. McDonald of the United Steelworkers of America] says he's going to kick out everybody who is a member of the Klan. I wish he would. We are seriously thinking about forming a Southern labor union."

The Klans around Birmingham have always drawn heavily on organized labor for their members. Several Klan leaders have union backgrounds. E. L. McDaniel, the United Klan's Grand Dragon in Mississippi, is a Natchez truck driver and a member of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

But the authorities do not believe that organized labor makes up any substantial portion of the total Klan membership. For one thing, there are few or no unions in many areas where the Klan is strong.

United Klan leaders are very public relations-minded. They will pose by the hour for photographers and in their talks with reporters they keep repeating:

"We're above board. We've got nothing to hide."

Mr. Shelton, a third-generation Klansman, was found in Atlanta on his way to the Carolinas for weekend rallies. "Come on out," said Calvin Craig, the Georgia Grand Dragon, who is also a crane operator, "we're having a board meeting."

It was after midnight and Mr. Craig's small home in an old section was the only lighted one on the block. Several cars

with short-wave radio antennas, including Mr. Shelton's Cadillac, were parked on the street.

The modest living room was filled with stacks of Klan propaganda—copies of *The Fiery Cross*, the organization's newspaper which claims 250,000 readers; and leaflets purporting to show that a host of civil rights leaders and public officials are Communists. The Imperial Wizard, in a well-tailored dark suit, was seated on a sofa having coffee and cookies before continuing his journey.

For several years, Mr. Shelton worked in a tire manufacturing plant in Tuscaloosa. At that time he was an Alabama Klan leader who worked for the election of former Gov. John Patterson in 1958.

Became Tire Salesman

After Mr. Patterson was inaugurated, Mr. Shelton was promoted to salesman and was frequently seen around the capitol in Montgomery selling tires to state agencies.

Mr. Shelton's occupation is now, as he puts it, "Kukluxing," but he still has access to the state capitol. Last year, the United States Bureau of Public Roads issued a report showing that Mr. Shelton was paid at least \$1,500 by the Dixie Engineering Company of Mobile to serve as a public relations man and to help the company obtain a consulting engineering contract from the State Highway Department.

Some consulting engineers reported that they were informed by Alabama highway officials that it would be necessary for them to employ a local individual or company as a condition of obtaining highway contracts. For several months the bureau has been withholding Federal aid for consulting contracts until the State Highway Department certifies that no such conditions are required.

Mr. Shelton a small, lean man, eased back on Mr. Craig's sofa and talked at length about the democratic structure of the Klan, plans to set up all-white communities of klansmen and their families, Klan insurance business and the effectiveness of his Klan Bureau of Investigation.

Mr. Craig, who is 36 and has a crew cut, is a candidate for the Georgia Legislature in the Democratic primary May 5. Although he came within 600 votes of defeating an incumbent State Senator last year, both Democratic and Republican leaders in Atlanta have been issuing statements saying that the grand dragon belongs in the other party.

"If I get elected, and I believe I will," Mr. Craig said, "the Ku Klux is going to be back in the capital strong."

At a Hemingway, S. C., rally the next night, the modd changed. While a 30-foot, bur-lap-wrapped cross soaked in 15 gallons of kerosene and 120 pounds of motor oil burned in the background, Mr. Shelton, in a purple robe and hood, talked of "beatniks, sex perverts, tennis shoe-wearing white trash" invading the South.

Referring to the murder of Mrs. Liuzzo, Mr. Shelton said:

"I have no desire to see any violence. But who caused the violence? If she had been home tending to her children she wouldn't have been sitting on the front seat with a young buck nigra."

From the crowd a woman screamed:

"She got what was coming to her!"

The fourth major Klan organization is centered in Jacksonville and St. Augustine, Fla. called the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of the North Florida Klan, it has a membership of about 1,000. It is one of the most militant groups in the country.

Its chief leader is believed to be Don Cothorn, a tall, mustached automobile mechanic of Jacksonville. This Klan is a complex of old and splinter Klaverns and gun clubs. It has a history of bombings and floggings and attracts the most inflammatory speakers.

A racial crisis such as that in St. Augustine last summer brings it together. Mr. Cothorn and other Klansmen came into town under the command of Holsted (Hoss) Manucy, a convicted bootlegger. Manucy said he was not a Klan member ["Whoever heard of a Catholic in the Klan?"] but he headed the Ancient City Gun Club, which United States District Judge Bryan Simpson suggested was a front for the Klan. One of the targets of the North Florida Klan is the F.B.I. State Attorney Dan Warren told how he was almost attacked during a riot in the St. Augustine town square.

"They thought I was an F.B.I. agent, apparently because I had a tie on," he said. "If I had been with the F.B.I. I'm convinced I would have been beaten up."

"I was amazed and astounded at the intensity of the feeling on the part of the segregationists," he continued. "It overwhelmed anything I had ever encountered before, and it reminded me of movies I have seen from the nineteen-thirties when Hitler was rising to power."

In addition to these main Klan groups, there are Dixie Klans, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Chattanooga, Tenn., 100 members; U. S. Klans, College Park, Ga.; Association of Georgia Klans, Bloomingdale, Ga.; Improved Order of U.S. Klans, Lethonia, Ga.—remnants of the Georgia complex that has not affiliated with the United Klans, each with less than 100 members; National Knights of the Ku Klux Klan Inc., Tucker, Ga., 25 members; the Association of Arkansas Klans, Pine Bluff, Ark., 50 members, and the Mississippi Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Gulfport, Miss., one member.

The authorities believe that much of the racial violence in the South in recent years was carried out not by Klans acting as such but by small groups of men who have been in and out of Klan or Klan-type of groups.

Discipline Called Lax

"Discipline is very poor in the Klans," a Federal agent said. "They are poorly and loosely organized. They are constantly grumbling, splintering and fall-

ing out. They pose no intelligence problem. We know everything about them."

"The main concern," he continued, "is that the Klans create the climate for violence. Klavern meetings are filled with talk about dynamiting, guns and violence."

In his book on the Klan, Mr. Randel pointed out that the Klan has survived because it has never ceased to draw encouragement from the success of the Reconstruction Klan.

"If a minority movement can successfully resist, in the eighteen-seventies, a Federal program to destroy traditional definition of 'real' Americans, a minority today, by sheer persistence, may hope to repeat the success."

"As long as some Americans sincerely believe that true Americanism is being subverted by Government officials and by groups not eligible for full status as Americans, the Klan will survive. As in Reconstruction times, it may change its name, and even some of its tactics, but its essential character will not be changed."

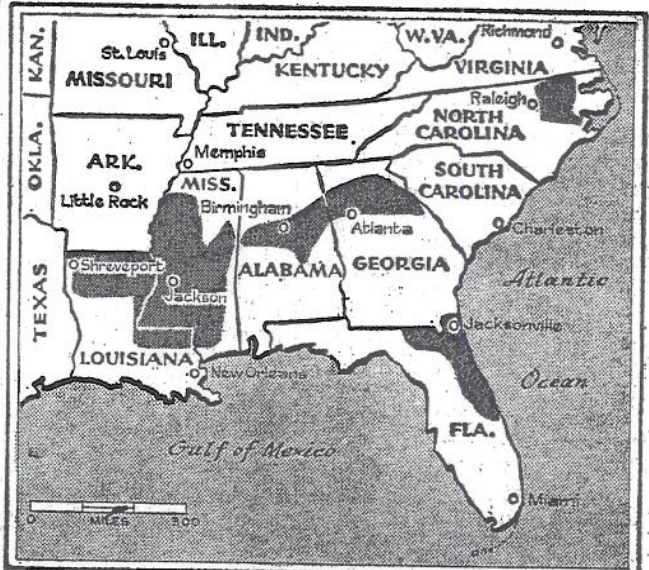
"Continued turbulence is the only reasonable forecast."

Terminology in The Klan

Special to The New York Times

ATLANTA, April 19—Following are Klan terms taken from a book of Klan organizations and ritual, copyrighted in 1953 by the late Eldon Edwards, Imperial Wizard of the now-defunct U. S. Klans, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Inc., and still in use by most Klan groups:

- Ayak: The challenge, Are You a Klansman?
- Akia: The password, A Klansman I Am.
- Klankraft: Practices and beliefs of the Klan.
- Invisible Empire: The universal geographical jurisdiction of this order and it shall embrace the whole world.
- Imperial Wizard: Chief of the Invisible Empire.
- Grand Dragon: Head of a realm (usually a state).
- Titan: Head of a province (usually a Congressional district).
- Cyclops: Head of a Klavern (local chapter).
- Kligrapp: Secretary.
- Klaliff: Vice president.
- Klokard: Lecturer.
- Kludd: Chaplain.
- Klabee: Treasurer.
- Kleagle: Organizer.
- Klonsel: Supreme attorney.
- Nighthawk: Chief Investigator (most klans now have a K.B.I.—Klan Bureau of Investigation—made up of klansmen who spy on the enemy).
- Klectoken: Initiation fee.



The New York Times April 20, 1968
Shaded areas are those in which Klan is active.



United Press International

PREPARING THE DEFENSE: Matt Murphy, second from left, counsel for United Klans of America, and Robert M. Shelton Jr., center, Imperial Wizard, confer with three

members indicted in killing of Mrs. Viola Gregg Liuzzo near Selma, Ala., last month. They are Eugene Thomas, left, William Eaton, right, and Collie LeRoy Wilkins Jr.



Black Star (by Danny Lyon)

PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION: Klansmen, who assert that they have nothing to hide, march in downtown Atlanta.



The New York Times

PRONOUNCING THE DOCTRINE: Unidentified Klan official in role of chairman at a Tuscaloosa, Ala., rally.