

National Association for the ... Advancement of Colored People.

The Ku Klux Are Riding Again!

BACK TO LIFE AND VERY ACTIVE AFTER FORTY YEARS! This is the thrilling story that one hears today in various parts of the South. The old Klan with its white-robed citizens going out to maintain the supremacy of the white race, as depicted by Thomas Dixon and his satellite, D. W. Griffith, has again come to life. Read this article printed in a daily in Montgomery, Ala.:

"KU KLUX KLANSMEN SUGGEST SILENT PARADE!"

"The city of Montgomery was visited last night by a Ku Klux Klan that bore all the earmarks of the ancient honorable order that placed white supremacy back in the saddle after a reign of terror for several years by Negroes and scalawags."

About one hundred white-robed figures silently paraded through the town and, as the paper specially mentioned, went into that section where the Negroes lived. The Klan, according to the paper from which we quote, is the only authorized organization of its kind in existence, having a charter from the state and the governor.

Montgomery is not the only city in Alabama in which demonstrations of the Ku Klux Klan have been made; Mobile, Birmingham, Troy, and some smaller towns have seen it and there are indications of a revival of the Klan in Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia, Florida and South Carolina.

In Tennessee it is being revived under a new name, the Columbian Union. The Chattanooga Times of December 12 made this statement on the subject:

"ORGANIZER OF KU KLUX GETS BUSY LOCALLY."

The spirit of the KU KLUX KLAN seems embodied in this Columbian Union, a new secret order originally chartered in Nashville, which is being organized in Chat-

tanooga by Arthur Mills, Majestic Viceroy. The purposes of the order are mysteriously surrounded with the traditions of the past, and are among the most unusual of any secret organization yet attempted. That the organizers anticipate racial troubles following the demobilization of the soldiers is indicated in the literature of the order, and Mr. Mills is outspoken in the belief that some such organization is necessary, especially in the South, when the Negro troops are mustered out and returned to their homes.

Allegiance to the United States, the support of the president and the suppression of enemy propaganda, are among the strict requirements of the order.

Prominent among the members of the Columbian Union are many important officials in state and city governments and influential business men. Mr. Mills declares that the Union will be the greatest society ever organized in the South and will be the most important factor in getting the government completely in the hands of the white race and making permanent white supremacy.

What purpose is back of the revival of this Klan?

Ostensibly it is revived for reasons of patriotism, to apprehend all slackers in the purchase of Liberty Bonds and Thrift Stamps. But for that purpose such an organization should have been alert long ago. On the contrary, the Ku Klux are first reported to us this autumn and the Columbian Union is a very recent secret order. Apprehending slackers North, South, East and West, has been the great stay-at-home sport of the war, but the Ku Klux, as their name implies, gave little time to this task, as compared with the other set before it, the keeping of the Negro in his place—the place of a submissive worker of an inferior race.

Why then should dominant whites have found this task especially needful today? The reason is obvious: The Negro with daily stride is taking his place as an equal of the white man. This has happened in two ways, in labor and in war.

Since the European war opened, the South has been suffering from a shortage of working men and women. From five hundred thousand to one million, five hundred thousand and Negroes, as variously estimated, have in the last four years left the South. They have gone North to seek greater economic opportunity, education for their children, safety from lynch law. They have also gone as soldiers into the service of the United States. This has given the remaining Negroes better positions than formerly, the chance to bargain for work, to demand a decent wage, to rise in the world. It is amusingly illustrated by the story of a white woman in a southern town who was unable to secure the services of a washerwoman. Seeing a Negro woman sitting on her porch, idle for a moment, the white woman approached her and said that she wanted some one to do her washing. "Do you?" the colored woman answered placidly, "Why so do I." A law was passed in one southern town (it may have been this one) forbidding any colored woman's working for another colored woman. Prosperity and a degree of leisure on the part of the wife and mother have formerly been unusual among the colored working women of the South and the Klan feels they do not keep the Negro in a properly subordinate "place."

If the Ku Klux Klan feels it has a task in keeping the worker in his place, how much more difficult it will find its job of reducing to subserviency the returning soldier. What will the black private and officer do when he gets back home? That is a question frequently asked in the South and there is some anxiety to be detected in the questioning. The matter was honestly, if not tactfully, put by the mayor of a small Georgia town on addressing a group of Negro draftees about to depart for Camp Gordon. According to one of his auditors he spoke in the following manner:

"You boys are going out to fight for your country and for democracy and that is a very fine thing, but there is one idea some of you have been expressing and I want

you to get it out of your minds. Don't think that after the war you are going to change things. I want to tell you here today that this isn't so, and you want to remember that our white boys are going over to France and learning how to fight, and that we here at home are preparing for you when you come back. Don't get any new fangled ideas about democracy."

The mayor was indiscreet enough to voice his personal opinion and the Ku Klux riding white-robed through the streets of Montgomery are a sign of applause to his utterance.

What were the Ku Klux, anyway? Dixon and Griffith to the contrary, they were not noble white citizens, but the precursors of the mobs that today burn and torture colored men and women criminals, or suspected criminals, or relatives of persons suspected of crime. We have ample evidence of this. In 1871 the complaints against the Ku Klux Klan in the South were so numerous that the Federal government instituted an investigation. It gathered testimony from all classes that fills many closely printed volumes. The crimes thus chronicled read extraordinarily like lynchings today. The Klan enters a Negro cabin and, enraged at not finding the father and older sons whom it seeks, drags the youngest boy out of the house and shoots him to death. The mother it hangs. An old colored man is shot at and wounded and then beaten to death. An aged Methodist minister, a white man this time, is dragged from his house hanged for a few moments for sport, cut down, beaten and then left with the admonition to leave the country within fifteen days. Whipping, bloodshed, raping of colored girls by white men, destruction of Negro property, a little library in a Negro cabin thrown into the fire with the stern command that no book be found again in that house—this is the real Ku Klux that an element in the South today proposes to emulate. It may have originated with a better group who desired simply to overawe the black man, but it soon degenerated into an organized mob actuated by the cruel, murderous impulses of the lynching mob today.

However, despite the advertisement given this new Klan in various places, there seems little danger that it will succeed. The best

element in the South is outspoken in its denunciation of such tactics. The Department of Labor at Washington has as Director of Negro Economics, Dr. George E. Haynes, who has been working for months to bring about better relations between white employers of Negro labor and their employees. Law and Order Leagues have sprung up, notably the one in Nashville which gives as its platform the desire:

"To create and arouse a more active public sentiment in the young and old in favor of enforcement of law and to combat the evils of lawlessness. To hold public meetings, prepare and distribute literature, provide lectures, and to urge the pulpit, press and schools to stress the necessity for the suppression of crime and the maintenance of law and order, to the end that mob violence and at least the more serious crimes shall be condemned by public sentiment and certainly punished by the established processes of the law."

Leading southern papers, among them the *Chattanooga Daily Times*, have written against this revival of old-time terrorism. Let them take to heart the pronouncement against lynching in the address to the country on July 26. President Wilson then called upon the "Governors of all the states, the law officers of every community and above all the men and women of every community in the United States, all who revere America and wish to keep her name without stain or reproach, to co-operate, not passively merely but actively and watchfully, to make an end of this disgraceful evil. It cannot live where the community does not countenance it." No Ku Klux Klan can endure where this pronouncement of our great executive is taken to heart.

And lastly, the Ku Klux will not succeed because they have a new Negro to threaten and terrify. When the white-robed figures went through the woods and the back places of the South shortly after the Civil War, they found a recently emancipated people, unlettered for the most part, without organization. Today the "Majestic Viceroy," or whatever they may call themselves, will fail to terrify men who have trained at camp, who have stood sentinel in the French forests, who have met and battled with a magnificently trained and relentless foe. And they will not be able to terrify those who

have followed the exploits of their men at the front. It is a new Negro who inhabits the South today, especially it is a new Negro youth—a youth that will not be cowed by silly superstition or fear.

PINK FRANKLIN PAROLED DURING GOOD BEHAVIOR

THOSE of us who helped to make history the first years of the N. A. A. C. P. will read this bit of news with a thrill of pure happiness. Pink Franklin was our first big case and our Executive Secretary, Frances Blascoer, handled it with consummate skill. She worked with prominent men of the state, she interviewed the governor, pleading with him to spare the life of this young man whose character was known to be straight and fine. She must get his release before the new year, for on that date Blease came into office and no hope of clemency was to be expected of him. At last, December 30, news was received that the sentence of death was changed to life imprisonment. We all felt that a great thing had been done, but year after year passed, we were unable to do anything further and we wondered if we had accomplished so much after all. In thought, at least, life imprisonment seems little better than death. But now comes the inspiring word that Franklin has been paroled during good behavior, which makes him a free man.

We print the story of the case as it appeared in our First Annual Report, January 1, 1911:

"Our legal redress work was inaugurated last summer by the presentation to Governor Martin F. Ansel, of South Carolina, of a petition for pardon from the death sentence of Pink Franklin, a plantation hand who had violated a so-called 'agricultural contract' (these contracts constituting the peonage laws of most of the Southern States), and who shot the constable sent to arrest him two months after the offense was committed. This constable, H. H. Valentine by name, broke into Franklin's cabin at three o'clock in the morning with drawn pistol, without announcing that he was an officer of the law and Franklin shot him in defense of his home. On January 6, 1911, Governor Ansel commuted Franklin's sentence to life imprisonment, but the Association will not cease its efforts to free Franklin from prison."