

**The Ku Klux Klan:
Evolution Towards Revolution**

by

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ABSTRACT

The Ku Klux Klan is the longest existing extremist group in the United States. It has moved through three distinctive phases of development: Resistance, Reactionary, and Revolutionary during its history. As a Security Threat Group, the crimes committed by members of the KKK were mostly political, but this may be changing. This paper examines the history, evolution, current operations and future of the KKK in the United States and possible implications for law enforcement.

Introduction

The most common image of the Ku Klux Klan is that of a group of hooded figures setting fire to a cross in the middle of the night with the intent to terrorize the locals into either doing or not doing something. The Klansmen are often viewed as being unintelligent and illiterate members of a monolithic secret organization with ideas that are at best outdated and at worst in stark variance from the mainstream norms. The Klan has gone through three distinct phases of evolution. The modern Klan is not as old fashioned as its detractors would have you believe. They use TV, radio, and the internet to spread their vision of a White America. Let us examine the evolution of the Klan and how it came to be the oldest and the most well known of

the White supremacist groups.

The Ku Klux Klan, with its mystiques and its long history of violence, is the most infamous—and oldest—of American hate groups. Although Blacks have typically been the Klan's primary target, it also has attacked Jews, immigrants, homosexuals and, until recently, Catholics.

The history of the Klan can be divided into three distinct phases:

1. Phase I, Resistance Movement (1865-1882)
2. Phase II, Reactionary Movement (1915-1944)
3. Phase III, Revolutionary Movement (1946-Present)

Phase I: Resistance Movement (1865-1882)

A groups of Confederate veterans met in Pulaski, Tennessee on December 24, 1865 to form a resistance organization to radical reconstruction policies being implemented by the occupying Union troops and the newly formed Freed Man's Bureau. Money was short. The South was militarily occupied and those that fought for the South were disenfranchised and forbidden to vote. The name chosen for this new organization was taken from the Greek word *kyklos*, which means circle or clan. Thus the Ku Klux Klan was formed and former Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest presided as Grand Wizard at the first convention held in Nashville, Tennessee in 1867.

The KKK's original goals were to:

1. Aid Confederate widows and orphans.
2. Oppose Reconstruction measures and Freedman's Bureau during the military occupation of the South.
3. Oppose voting rights for Blacks and former slaves. (White former Confederates were banned from voting for many years).
4. Punish whites who aided Federal Reconstruction efforts.

The men of the KKK wore masks to hide their identities. If they had been recognized, they would have been prosecuted and executed by the occupation forces of the Union Army. They often rode by night, attacking and intimidating their enemies (Dray, 2003). It was the most widespread of several guerrilla type groups that spread in the South after the Civil War (Pfeifer, 2004). Lynching, tar-and-featherings, rape and other violent attacks on those challenging White supremacy became a hallmark of the Klan.

Describing KKK operations during this period, Chalmers (1987) observed that:

“Nevertheless, as the Klansmen themselves boasted, the were a ‘rough bunch of boys.’ The method of the Klan was violence. It threatened, exiled, flogged, mutilated, shot, stabbed, and hanged. It disposed of Negroes who were not respectful, or committed crimes, or belonged to military or political organizations such as the Loyal and Union Leagues. It drove out Northern schoolteachers and Yankee storekeepers and politicians, and ‘took care of’

Negroes who gained land and prospered, or made inflammatory speeches or talked about equal rights. It assaulted carpetbag judges, intimidated juries, and spirited away prisoners. It attacked officials who registered Negroes, who did not give whites priority, or who foreclosed property” (pp. 10).

Along with the terror, some acts of kindness were also undertaken by the KKK. Horn (1939) related several incidents that members of the KKK left charitable packages of food, household good, and money for the widows and families of deceased Confederate veterans. Hood noted that in several instances these donations included \$100 in cash to the widows. This was an immense amount of money at a time in which a U.S. Army private was paid \$8 a month.

The KKK began to grow throughout the old states of the Confederacy. The Realm was the state organization and its’ leader was known as the Grand Dragon. Realms were subdivided into Dominions of five or more counties led by a Great Titan, Provinces consisting of two or three counties led by a Giant and finally Dens led by a Den Commander. The Den was the smallest operational unit of the Klan (Beam, 1982, 28-30). Realms flourished in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. The KKK Realms has lesser success in Louisiana, Texas, and Virginia, where they competed with other resistance organizations, but they were still present (Horn, 1939). Trelease (1971) noted that the KKK also had expanded into Kentucky during this period. The outlandish titles, violent “night rides” and the notion that the group comprised an “invisible empire” conferred a mystique the only added to the Klan’s popularity.

On August 28, 1868, an interview with General Nathan Bedford Forrest was printed in the *Cincinnati Commercial* newspaper. In that interview, Forrest claimed that there were over 40,000 KKK members in Tennessee and over 550,000 nationwide. Forrest, apparently wishing to avoid any Federal implications about his anti-government statements and his position on the Klan wrote a letter clarifying his position that was published along with the article noting that the KKK recognized the authority of the Federal government and obeyed the laws (Horn, 1939, 410-416).

However, in 1869 Forrest ordered that the Klan be disbanded and officially disbanded the organization. Forrest believed that the KKK had evolved into an entity that had strayed from its’ original mission and was too prone to violence. Thus when Forrest was called upon to testify before Congress, he was able to tell them that the Klan had been disbanded.

Most of the Realms did not disband but continued operations for several more years. Congress passed the Klan Act and Enforcement Act in 1871 and it was signed into law by President Grant (Trelease, 1971). By the time that the law was declared unconstitutional in 1882, most of the KKK had been routed or disbanded. The Whites that had fought for the South had been pardoned and had resumed control of the state governments. The southern states passed a series of laws known

as the “Jim Crow” laws that severely restricted the rights of Blacks to vote and enforced segregation. There was no longer a need of the KKK.

Phase II: Reactionary Movement (1915-1944)

The second phase of the KKK was influenced by the media. Thomas Dixon Jr.’s 1905 book *The Clansman* was made into a movie by D.W. Griffith in 1915 entitled “*The Birth of a Nation*”. Both the book and the movie demonized the role of Federal Forces in Reconstruction, especially the role of African Americans in the Freedman’s Bureau (who were portrayed as a threat to White womanhood). The members of the Ku Klux Klan were lionized as heroes who saved the virtue of the Heroine and thwarted the evil plots of the carpetbaggers, etc.. The movie was extremely popular and is considered to be a cinema classic. President Woodrow Wilson said: “It is like writing history with lighting...and my only regret is that it is all so terribly true.” The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Justice Edward White has been cited as asking Dixon if the movie told the “true” story of the Klan. When Dixon said yes, Justice White told him that he had been a Klansman in New Orleans and he would come to see the movie (Chalmers, 1987, pp. 26-27). The film was used by the Klan to recruit new members (MacLean, 1994, pp. 142-143).

The revival of the KKK occurred on Thanksgiving, 1915 and was led by Col. William J. Simmons. Simmons was sworn in as Imperial Wizard by some former KKK members of the original KKK at Stone Mountain Georgia. Simmons served as Imperial Wizard from 1915 to 1923. Unlike the original KKK, which was formed as a resistance organization and most of whose members voted Democratic, the KKK of the second phase was organized as a fraternal organization. It drew members from both the Republican and Democratic parties. The revitalized organization adopted the cross as its’ symbol and took pride in selling itself as a “Christian” organization.

The goals of the second phase of the KKK were:

1. Anti-Immigrant agenda
2. Anti-Catholic agenda (primary religion of immigrants)
3. Anti-Jewish agenda (2nd largest religion of immigrants).
4. Racist agenda (enforce “Jim Crow”)
5. Protect “White Womanhood”

One of the innovations that Simmons undertook was to form alliances both formal and informal with fundamentalist Protestant churches. Simmons had been a circuit riding preacher for the Methodists, but he was denied a pulpit by the Alabama Conference in 1912 “because of inefficiency and moral impairment” (Chalmers, 1987, 29). However, Simmons was very aware of the influence that the clergy had on members of their parishes and sought their membership and support. Describing the Klan’s efforts to seek this support from the clergy, Chalmers (1987) found that:

“The usual Klan pattern was to approach the local Protestant minister. He would be offered a free membership and urged to take office in the to-be-formed local, either as its chaplain (Kludd) or higher up in the leadership structure. Hundreds

upon hundreds did join, and in some areas constituted a major portion of the local officialdom. Others left their flocks for the wider Klan calling as either organizers or speakers. Almost all of the national Klan lecturers were ministers. Usually the presence of a Klan in town was announced by a Saturday night parade of hooded horsemen down main street, a cross blazing on a nearby hillside, or a sudden appearance in the midst of a Sunday service. Robed in white, masked, they would divide into three columns and march silently down the aisles congregating in front of the pulpit to present a purse of thirty five or forty dollars to the minister. If their appearance was not completely unexpected or unwelcome, they might file into the front rows that had been left vacant, while the minister or one among them propounded the principles of the Klan and read from the Twelfth Chapter of Romans, calling upon them to present their bodies, through the Klan, as 'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.' Or, having made the donation, they might march out again while the church choir sang 'The Old Rugged Cross' or Onward Christian Soldiers" (pp.34-35).

Observing the influence of the Klan on fundamentalist clergy , Wade (1987) stated that:

"Ministers saw with their own eyes that the Klan dramatically increased church attendance, and they could hardly agree with success" (pp. 175).

Ridgeway (1990) concurred with the influence of fundamentalist Protestant ministers in the Ku Klux Klan observing that approximately 40,000 ministers had joined the KKK in the 1920's. These ministers became the Grand Dragons in Colorado, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Texas. Their influence assisted the Klan in growth across the country and added religious prejudice to the mix of philosophy of the KKK. Ridgeway (1990) found that:

"The Klan's campaign to recruit fundamentalist ministers was celebrated as 'the return of the Puritans in this corrupt and jazz-mad age.' Bootlegging was a particular target, and while the Klan viewed Jews as 'insoluble and indigestible,' they really hit a resonant chord of response by reviving what might have seemed to be a tired theme: Pope bashing. Catholicism, as one minister described it, was nothing more the 'Christianity in an Italian dress.' The KKK played on this theme so successfully that by 1925 it had more members than ever, and played a vociferous role in the smear campaign aimed at Al Smith, the Roman Catholic Democratic presidential candidate in 1928" (Ridgeway, 1990, pp.37).

Not all Protestant churches supported the Klan. Denominations such as the Congregationalists, Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian and Universalist generally opposed or looked unfavorably upon the Klan. The Klan found a more favorable reception among the Baptists, Disciples of Christ and the Methodists. However, the

upper leadership of these denominations (i.e. Methodist Bishops in particular) often openly opposed the Klan (Chalmers, 1987, pp293).

Intimidation was a standard tactic as were lynchings of individuals. In Tulsa, Oklahoma's predominately Black Greenwood district was burned in 1921 (Madigan, 2003). Describing the changes and continuation of tradition in the second phase of the KKK, Trelease (1971) observed that:

“During the First World War the new Klan won attention as a super patriotic organization. In the early 1920's it mushroomed to national proportions, far exceeding the membership and geographical extent of the Reconstruction Klan. The new order shared the Negrophobia of the old, but its list of hates and fears reached also to Catholics, Jews, immigrants, radicals, organized labor, and other groups who posed an imagined threat to individuals in every part of the country. In addition, the new Klan developed into a financial racket among its promoters, some of whom became rich in consequence. This had not happened during Reconstruction. But the new Klan, as a vigilante organization practicing intimidation and violence on those it opposed, and wielding tremendous political power in behalf of intolerance and proscription, bore a striking resemblance to its predecessor. The distinctions between them are less than many people—deprecating the new but celebrating the old—have wanted to believe” (pp. 422).

The Klan became more respectable, while remaining violent. Most of the Klan members were from the middle classes (MacLean, 1994, pp. 52-74). However, many of the KKK members were prominent Americans. President Woodrow Wilson was a secret member. President Warren Harding was initiated into the Klan in the White House by Imperial Wizard Simmons in 1920. Harry Truman belonged from 1920 to 1922, but repudiated the KKK over political issues (<http://www.kkkklan.com/wall.htm>). The Klan became more and more involved in politics. The Klan openly campaigned for the election of Calvin Coolidge to President. The term Invisible Empire refers to the KKK's influence in the society and politics of the 1920's and 1930's in America.

The Klan was active in the media of the period. The Klan spoke on the radio and published over 150 different magazines in their attempts to sway public opinion to their way of thinking. They joined a chorus of radio evangelists that preached anti-Catholic or anti-Semitic themes during this period. Of course, the traditional parades in full Klan regalia were still held for recruiting and to show public support for Klan ideas. Symbolism was used to create street theatre and thus promote the KKK cause and agenda. This remains true even today.

With the assent in 1923 of Dr. Hiram W. Evans to Imperial Wizard, the KKK began to grow at a phenomenal rate. Evans was to remain Imperial Wizard until 1939. At its' height KKK membership was estimated to be 4 or 5 million (KKK chaplain Louis Beam claims 9 million, but most sources agree the 4 or 5 million

figure is more accurate). The KKK held open massive marches through the streets of Washington, D.C. and were reviewed by President Coolidge himself in the Parades of 1925 and 1926. The KKK was influential in several state governments in Indiana, Maine, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Texas. The presidential elections of 1924 and passage by Congress in 1925 of new immigration-restriction laws were hailed by the Klan as triumphs. These two events and the Washington D.C. parades of 1925 & 1926 marked the highpoint of Klan political influence in the United States (Chalmers, 1981, pp 283).

The popularity of the KKK began to wane after the 1925 second degree murder conviction of Grand Dragon David C. Stephenson as a result of a scandalous sexually related murder of female supporter Marge Oberholzer (Ridgeway, 1990, pp.37). The subsequent indictments of the governor of Indiana and the mayor of Indianapolis for corruption further tarnished the fraternal image of the KKK. A series of newspaper exposes accelerated the decline. Many localities and some states began to pass laws against the wearing of masks. Many of these laws are still in effect. In a 2004 court challenge to the Constitutionality of these laws (Ku Klux Klan vs. Kelley, 04-223), the anti-mask law of the State of New York was upheld by the Supreme Court (Holland, 2004).

Typical of the Klan rise and fall was the experience in Kansas. At its height in 1921, Klan membership was estimated to be as much as 200,000. (out of a total population of 1,769,257 per 1920 census) (<http://fisher.libvirginia.edu/cgi-local/censusbin/census/cen.pl>). In Kansas the Klan's activity centered around anti-Catholic activities including kidnapping the Catholic mayor of Liberty, Kansas in 1921. While many Kansans supported the Klan, many also opposed it. One of the most influential opponents was Emporia newspaper editor, William Allen White. Many made fun of the Klan and portrayed it satirically. In 1924, Helen May Marcell, a student at the University of Kansas wrote a nationally popular song entitled *Daddy Stole Our Last Clean Sheet and Joined the Ku Klux Klan*. Kansas Governor Henry Allen declared it illegal to wear masks on Kansas streets in 1922. The Attorney General of then State of Kansas declared the Klan as a out of state "foreign" corporation and refused to grant it a commerce license or charter to operate in Kansas. This was challenged in court by the Klan, but in 1925, the Supreme Court of the State of Kansas ruled in favor of the Attorney General and the Klan was no longer welcome in Kansas for many years (<http://www.kshs.org/cool2/klan.htm>). Kansas was the first state to officially and legally oust the Ku Klux Klan.

Other splits developed over traditional political allegiances. The Klan realms in the North were by and large Republicans, those in the South were Democrats for the most part (although the KKK opposed the election of FDR in the 1932 election). The Southern Klan realms tended to dominate the leadership and by the 1930's this had wore thin with the realms in the North.

The advent of the Great Depression left the KKK broke as many members could no longer afford to pay dues. Klan dues were \$10.00 a year and that was a lot of money when large sections of the national were on public assistance. During this time period, the KKK began to change religions as well. Many of the national leaders of the traditional fundamentalist Protestant denominations whose rank and file clergy had been Klan members, began to denounce the Klan and forbid practicing clergy from belonging to it. This diminished the role of traditional clergy from mainline fundamentalist denominations in the KKK.

As a result of Wesley Swift's influence during the 1930's and 1940's, many became members of Christian Identity sects. Indeed this conversion from fundamentalist Protestants to Identity Christian has continued to this very day and Identity is now the dominant religion among the KKK across the United States. Quarles (2004) observed that the KKK was among the first right wing organization to adopt this philosophy (pp. 58). Christian Identity has grown to be one of the four predominant religions practiced by white supremacists (Christian Identity, World Church of the Creator/Creativity, Satanism, Norse/Germanic Paganism). The Christian Identity religion developed from British Israelism and asserts:

1. Whites, not Jews, are the true Israelites, favored by God in the Bible.
2. Jews and non-whites are literally the spawn of Satan, through Cain (Mud People and the Dual or Demon Seed Theory).
3. Christ was an Aryan.
4. Mary was from Glastonbury, England and Jesus lived there from age 12 until his 30's.

By the time that Dr. James A. Colescott became Imperial Wizard in 1939, the KKK was in decline (in spite of the appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1937 of former Klansman Hugo Black by FDR). Membership fell to about 40,000 (Ridgeway, 1990). Attempts in 1940 by some Northern realms (i.e. New Jersey) to ally themselves with the pro-Nazi German/American Bund were largely unsuccessful (Chalmers, 1987, pg 322-323). An address by Grand Dragon Arthur Bell to a joint rally of Klansmen and the German Bund near Andover, New Jersey on August 18, 1940 calling for a proposed merger of the two groups moved Congress to investigate both groups (Wade, 1987, pp.210) Finally, in 1944, owing the IRS over one quarter of a million dollars in back taxes, Colescott officially disbanded the KKK. As a result of this disbandment, the Klan lost all of its' copyrights and the name Ku Klux Klan entered the public domain.

Phase III: Revolutionary Movement (1946-Present)

The third phase of the KKK began once again on Stone Mountain, Georgia when Dr. Samuel Green revived the dormant organization. In order to avoid liability for the back taxes owed by the previous incarnation of the KKK during phase II, Green adopted the ingenious idea of organizing the Klan into many state level

organizations rather than a single nationwide Klan. He took the title Grand Dragon (state leader) rather than Imperial Wizard. Green was a medical doctor in private practice. Dr. Green served as Grand Dragon from 1946-49 until his death.

The goals of the third phase of the KKK were:

1. Anti-Civil Rights agenda
2. Anti-Semitic agenda
3. Anti-Immigrant agenda
4. White Supremacist agenda including a revolutionary component (race warriors).

Georgia State Police Colonel Samuel Roper served as Imperial Wizard of the Georgia Association of Klans from 1949-50. Roper had been a police chief in the Atlanta area and the head of the GSP. The Klan in Georgia heavily supported the political campaigns of Georgia Governor Talmadge. Roper was not a dynamic leader or a unifier. The Klans began to split into multiple factions rapidly (Chalmers, 1987, pp.335).

Elton Edwards served as Imperial Wizard from 1950 until his death in 1960. Edwards was an auto worker in the Chevrolet plant in Atlanta, Georgia. He reorganized the Klan into the U.S. Klans. During his reign the Klan fought against civil rights, especially after the *Brown Vs. B.O.E.* of Topeka, Kansas decision in 1954 that mandated the integration of public schools.

Klan members fighting against the Civil Rights movements used assassination of target individuals as a primary tactic. They murdered civil rights leaders and activists across the South. They burned or bombed churches that Civil Rights was preached about. They openly threatened anyone who sought to interfere with their beliefs or actions. Levitas (2002) found that:

“...most Klan factions bombed, beat, and burned their way through the post-*Brown* era. Between January 1, 1956 and June 1, 1963, at least 138 dynamite bombings shattered black homes, churches, and integrated facilities across the South. Not to be spared were the homes of integrationist whites, as well as Jewish synagogues in Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Tennessee, which also became targets in 530 acts of Klan violence from 1954 to 1959” (pp.74).

These actions outraged the American people and brought the involvement of the Federal government. The Federal government began to prosecute the KKK members for violation of civil rights of the victims with some success. Integration became the law of the land and was enforced by U.S. Marshals, backed when needed by Federal troops. The power of the KKK was broken, one prosecution at a time. However the KKK did not go away. It simply became more subtle in its' actions and more public in its protests.

Many open criminal cases that were decades old have been reopened recently by federal or state prosecutors and have resulted in convictions. For example: in 2003, former Klansman Ernest Avants was convicted in Jackson, Mississippi of the murder of Ben Chester White that had occurred in 1966. Avants and his co-conspirators

thought that the murder of an innocent black man would lure the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King to come to Mississippi and the conspirators plotted to assassinate King. Avants had been acquitted in state court in 1967 but was convicted in Federal court (Bragg, 2003). On January 7, 2005, Former Klansman and preacher, 79 year old Edgar Ray Killen was arrested in Philadelphia, Mississippi for the murders of three Congress of Racial Equality workers (Michael Schwerner, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman) in 1964. While 18 Klansmen had originally been charge in 1967 with the killings of the C.O.R.E. workers, only 7 were convicted and Killen was released after a all white hung jury could not reach a verdict. New evidence provided by Imperial Wizard Sam Bowers of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (who is serving a life sentence for his involvement in a 1966 firebombing that killed civil right leader Vernon Dahmer) implicated Killen and a Grand Jury indicted Killen for murder (McFadden, 2005). The long periods between the crime's occurrence and the commencement of prosecutions have posed many problems for prosecutors. Many of the defendants, witnesses, law enforcement personnel or others involved are either very old or are deceased. Reports and forensic work that is decades old must be gathered up for trial. In spite of the difficulties many of these prosecutions have been successful.

Robert M. Shelton served as the Imperial Wizard of the United Klans of America from 1960-1987. His organization fought civil rights during the 1960's across America. Shelton was able to unite most of the Klan factions under his leadership. During the 1970's the Klan was greatly weakened by internal conflicts, court cases, and a seemingly endless series of splits and government infiltration. Adverse court decisions and lawsuits have forced the Klan to become a state by state, rather than a national organization. While some factions have preserved an openly racist and militant approach, others have tried to enter the mainstream, clocking the racism as mere "civil rights for whites."

The KKK has been forced into a new era. Those KKK members and realms that have chosen to follow the militant path have begun to ally themselves with neo-Nazi groups and other white supremacists. This trend began in the 1980's. The racist community had expanded and spoke openly of a "White Revolution" and the establishment of "White Homelands". The Klan stepped away from its' traditional stance of fraternal aloofness and embraced collective alliances with others of like mind. Gone were the days of the 1960's where Rockwell's Nazis made fun of the KKK to be dismissed by Klansmen as Un-American. Since the 1980's Klan adopted the paramilitary views of the neo-Nazis as to the coming race war. The racists began to dance cheek to cheek in common cause as potential "race warriors" in the coming "White Revolution." Swastikas joined crosses as objects to be burned at rallies and ceremonies as a show of racist unity (Rider, 2002, pp.65). As race warriors they donned fatigues and saved their sheets for parades and formal ceremonies. KKK members have been seen at National Socialist Movement, National Alliance, and Aryan Nations rallies supporting the cause. Quarles (1999) felt that this cooperation

intensified after 1985 as the KKK adopted such dogmas as the “Turner Diaries” and the inevitability of an upcoming race war into their overall philosophies (pp. 119). Moser (2004) cited the KKK’s anti-immigrant stand against Hispanic immigrants in Georgia began in earnest in 1998 and was integrated with efforts of neo-Nazi groups such as the National Alliance (pp. 40-50).

Observing the trend towards the paramilitarization of the KKK, Dees and Corcoran (1996) observed that in 1984, Glen Miller’s Carolina Knights of the Ku Klux Klan had become a “private army”. Speaking about Miller they further observed that:

“An ex-Green Beret and former member of the National Socialist Party of America, Miller fashioned his Klan group into a paramilitary army that had more than a thousand members—many of them ex-military personnel—in the Carolinas and Virginia. This group terrorized minorities in the region” (pp.96).

Langer (2003) observed that in the late 1980’s the KKK began to associate with skinheads, neo-Nazis and other White supremacist groups on a more formal and frequent basis. She stated that:

“White supremacists whose identities were formed in the World War II era did not universally welcome the convergence. ‘You don’t have to be a Nazi to be an antisemite,’ a Klan leader explained to me as late in the process as 1989, by no means a singular position. In part out of the same residual patriotism, when neo-Nazi skinheads began attending racist gatherings in the mid to late 1980’s, they were often shunned, with some older leaders refusing to share platforms with them or to shake their hands. Such resistance has now all but disappeared.” (pp.128).

The Klan has always been involved in politics. The KKK poster child for this in the 1980’s became a Grand Wizard of the realm of Louisiana known as David Duke. Duke was the Grand Wizard from 1975-79. He began his extremist career in a Nazi uniform picketing an attorney, William Kunstler, who was speaking at Tulane University in the early 1970’s. Duke was a member of the White Youth Alliance which was affiliated with the National Socialist White People’s Party. Duke latter became instrumental in the revival of the KKK in Louisiana. Duke allowed women to join the Klan as equal members and even invited Catholics to join. He was a clean cut, buttoned down shirt, suit wearing professional in appearance. He represented the new face of the Klan. (http://www.adl.org/learn/ext_us/duke.asp) Duke was successfully elected to the State Legislature in Louisiana in 1989 for 1 term. He had often used skinheads as political volunteers in his political campaigns. Duke founded the National Association for the Advancement of White People. He mainstreamed his racist politics as civil rights for whites. Duke conducted unsuccessful political campaigns for the US Senate, US Congress, Governor of Louisiana, and President of the United States followed. He founded the European-American Unity and Rights Organization. Duke coordinated with European and Russian fascists. His fund raising tactics got him into legal troubles with the Federal government. Duke was arrested

and convicted of mail fraud and filing a false tax return in 2003. He was released from prison in 2004. Duke still speaks on ultra-right wing radio and maintains a website (<http://www.davidduke.com/>).

Another approach being taken by the Klan is mainstreaming their racist ideas into smaller more logical sounding arguments that appeal to the majority of the public. This is especially true in the areas of their anti-immigrant and anti-civil right agendas. These areas are now being presented on a fairness (rights for whites) or a economic/patriotic (jobs for Americans) format that is more palatable to the middle classes. Citing the efforts of Klan leaders to make their positions more acceptable, Perry (2001) found that:

“The KKK has been at the forefront of the movement toward a more moderate appearance. Grand Wizard Thomas Robb, for example, asserted that Klan leaders would be ‘taught to avoid statements that sound hateful and turn people off’. He and others of like mind speak of love of the white race, rather than hatred of others; they speak of preservation of a way of life, and other such mantras. In their search for respectability; some hate groups have rejected explicitly racist terms for more ‘subtle’ code words that act as proxies for traditional rhetoric. Primary among these is the assurance that they don’t hate black or Jews or gays; rather they simply love their own race. ZOG becomes ‘government interference’; White Christian becomes ‘average citizen’; cross burning become ‘illuminations’; African Americans become ‘welfare cheaters.’ Don Black, for example, eschews the pejorative connotations of ‘racist’ in favor of the term ‘White Nationalist’. Revisionist historians focusing on Holocaust denial are perhaps the most gifted at couching their anti-Semitism in euphemisms. Rather than speaking of the ‘holohoax’ of Jewish conspiracies, they artfully phrase their appeals in terms of scientific evidence, such as aerial photography, or DNA evidence. Whatever the rhetoric, the message remains the same: the Other is not to be trusted; the Other threatens the white, Christian, heterosexual hegemony” (pp.166-167).

The KKK has become more adept at spreading the message of hate to the general public as well as to their faithful followers. In addition to the traditional public rally or march, the KKK uses:

1. Drive-by pamphleting (pamphlets and flyers are dumped onto lawns and placed in roadside mailboxes).
2. Radio Shows (AM band mostly)
3. TV Talk Shows (Cable Public Access TV and Talk Shows that aim for a sensationalist or confrontational style from guests).
4. Internet

The Klan has expanded its’ radio show format to include television. Klan sponsored or approved formats have appeared on numerous public access TV stations in Kansas City, Missouri; Beaverton, Oregon (ch23) ; and other locations across the county. These programs usually appear under the guise of free speech, opposing

views or political affairs listings. The Klan allies with other groups such as skinheads (i.e. Oregon) or sometime goes it alone (i.e. Kansas City). In these type programs the traditional white sheets are usually put away and white berets are often worn . Discussion of issues is conducted rationally and in terms of “natural order” rather than on typical hate rhetoric. (<http://nukeisrael.com/white%20power%20public%20access%20tv.htm>). Another KKK tactic has been to make guest appearances on TV talks shows such as “Jerry Springer” and other talks shows that attempt to appeal to those who enjoy the conflict of ideas or just plain conflict. Then the traditional Klan robes are often worn to “stir the mix” of ideas. Jeff Berry from the American Knights made several appearances on the “Jerry Springer” show. Although his public stands did not save Berry from being sentenced to 7 years in prison for Conspiracy to Commit Criminal Confinement in December, 2001 (http://www.adl.org/learn/ext_us/KKK.asp?xpicked=4&item=18). They were also among the first of the extremist groups to adopt the internet as a means of communication, training, and recruiting (thanks to the vision of KKK member Louis Beam in the 1980’s). The Klan even has a record label that caters to younger music tastes.

While recruiting in person or on-line, the KKK groups have been seeking to expand their membership base. KKK membership is restricted to:

1. Whites
2. Of legal age.
3. Of non-Jewish ancestry.
4. Professing a belief in the separation of races,
5. And having never participated in a interracial relationship (Beam, 1982).

One of the most effective tactics used against the KKK has been civil lawsuits brought by the Southern Poverty Law Center led by Morris Dees. These lawsuits have drained the wealth of the KKK and seized their assets. This has crippled the KKK and lessened their effectiveness by forcing them into ever smaller splinter groups to avoid civil liability for their collective actions. The Federal government has begun to open up old cold cases of the murder of people during the Civil Rights era and the resulting convictions have further hampered the Klan.

However with more and more KKK members going to prison, another avenue of opportunity has opened up for the Klan and it is being used to recruit new members, the prison gang. KKK groups have begun to be a factor in prison gangs. Prison is a good recruiting ground for members among the white supremacist population that is incarcerated. As is typical of many prison gangs, the drug trade is a primary source of power and income. A recent study by the National Gang Crime Research Center found that the KKK was listed as a security threat group or prison gang that was active in 17 of the states that responded to the survey (Knox, 2004, pp.34). The primary religion of many Klan members is Christian Identity and that group maintains extensive prison ministries. Many extremist groups use this constitutionally protected

opportunity to meet people of a like mind and to recruit. KKK groups that are currently active in prisons include:

1. 311's (the 11th letter of the alphabet is K, 3 x 11=KKK)
2. 211's (Kolorado Klan in CDOC prisons, also the Colorado penal code for robbery and many are serving terms for that crime).
3. Confederate Knights of America (TDOJ in Texas).

The KKK has acquired somewhat of a sense of humor declaring that: "This is not your Daddy's Klan anymore!" and claiming to be "The Original Boys in the Hood!"

Today, it is estimated that there are a total of 5,500 to 600 Klan members, split among scores of different — and often warring—organizations that use the Klan name. The Southern Poverty Law Center identified 158 separate Ku Klux Klan factions operating in the United States during 2003. KKK chapters have been identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center in 2003 in the following states: Texas (24), Arkansas (11), Georgia (11), Tennessee (11), Ohio (10), Alabama (8), Florida (8), Louisiana (8), Indiana (6), Mississippi (6), Pennsylvania (5), Michigan (4), Virginia (4), California (3), Kentucky (3), North Carolina (3), New York (3), Oklahoma (3), West Virginia (3), Illinois (2), Maryland (2), Missouri (2), Arizona (1), Connecticut (1), Washington D.C. (1), Iowa (1), Kansas (1), Montana (1), Nebraska (1), New Jersey (1), Nevada (1) and South Carolina (1) (Potok, 2004, pp. 36-54).

In Washington and Montana, KKK members have "cross patched" with members of the Ghost Riders MC, an outlaw motorcycle gang. Members of the Ghost Riders have been involved extensively in the drug trade and counterfeiting in their areas. This may signal yet a new chapter in the history of the KKK. New chapters of the Ghost Riders have been spotted in Texas and Tennessee recently.

Summary

The KKK has managed to survive through three distinct phases from 1865 to the present day. Chalmers (1987) stated that:

"The Klan has been a vigilante organization, a national liberation front, a revitalization movement, a secret order, a fraternal lodge, a status society, a bastion of poor-boy politics and in the twentieth century, a money-maker for its leaders. Its method has been violence" (pp. 425).

The KKK has adapted its agenda to meet the prejudices and hates of its members over the years. KKK members have been frequent participants in hate crimes. The often long gaps between the occurrence of KKK crimes and convictions (often as much as 40 years) have emboldened the Klansmen to believe that they were beyond the conventional law. Many times the KKK members were acquitted by friendly juries or never charged. This further enhanced the KKK mystique and emboldened its members. However, since the 1990's federal and state governments have been re-opening many of these "cold" cases and successfully prosecuting them.

During the past 10 years, the Ku Klux Klan has sometime become a team player with other white supremacist groups. The organization's ability to adapt to changing conditions including becoming a prison STG and cross patching with an outlaw motorcycle gang shows that the KKK remains as a force that bears watching among the white supremacist movements.

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