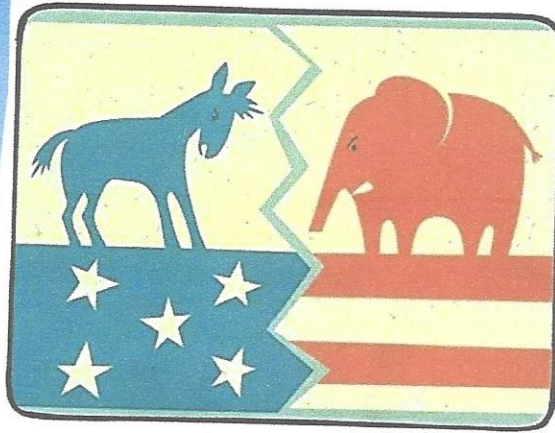


The Ku Klux Klan and the Democratic Party: A Union of Hate

THE BEGINNINGS OF DEMOCRAT & REPUBLICAN PARTIES

Since its founding in 1829, the Democrat Party has fought against every program to improve life for former slaves, and has a long history of discrimination against "non-white" people. The Democrat Party defended slavery, started the Civil War, opposed Reconstruction, "founded" the Ku Klux Klan, passed & enforced Jim Crow laws, imposed segregation, perpetrated lynchings, and fought against the Civil Rights Acts of 1866, 1870, 1871, 1875, 1883, 1957, 1964, 1968, as well as the Voting Rights Act of 1965.



In contrast, the Republican Party was founded in 1854 as an anti-slavery party. Its mission was to stop the spread of slavery into the new western territories with the aim of abolishing it entirely. This effort, however, was dealt a major blow by the assassination of the first Republican president, Abraham Lincoln, which placed a Democrat, Andrew Johnson, in the White House. During the following 100 years, Republicans proposed each & every civil rights legislation. Some were blocked by Democrats, some were passed over Democrat opposition.



THE KU KLUX KLAN

Democrat Party leaders did not create the Ku Klux Klan in the formal sense. They didn't hold a meeting to decide that they needed a terrorism department to keep African Americans and Southern Republicans terrorized. But the Democrat Party in the former slave states did make use of the KKK and coordinate KKK activities with their own, especially during election seasons.

The Democrat Party, including President Johnson, were unified in their opposition to the 13th Amendment (1865), which abolished slavery; the 14th Amendment (1868), which gave former slaves citizenship; and the 15th Amendment (1870), which gave African Americans the vote. All three were proposed by Republicans and passed only because of universal GOP support. Ulysses S. Grant, the second Republican president, sent federal troops to the south to secure rights for the newly freed slaves.

Some KKK members held elective office. Perhaps the most recent Klan member to hold office was West Virginia's Democrat, Robert C. Byrd. He got his start in politics because he founded a local KKK chapter, and was actively involved with the Ku Klux Klan from 1930s to 1950s, rising to the highest positions of leadership.

Byrd was first elected to congress in 1953, before holding a senate seat from 1959 to his death in 2010, and held many leadership positions within the Democrat Party during his long career. His Senate colleagues and the Democrat National Committee were well aware of Byrd's KKK affiliation.

The First Klan – 1865 -1871

Six Confederate veterans in Tennessee created the original Ku Klux Klan on December 24, 1865, just 18 days after the Thirteenth Amendment was ratified, permanently outlawing slavery. Membership consisted mainly of Confederate veterans as the KKK grew rapidly from a secret social fraternity into a paramilitary force. The members were eager to reverse the federal Reconstruction Era activities in the South.

Wearing white robes and hoods to hide their faces, KKK activities included terrorist raids at night against African Americans and white Republicans, whom they blamed for elevating former slaves. They used intimidation, destruction of property, beatings and murder to influence elections and prevent blacks from fully exercising their civil rights.

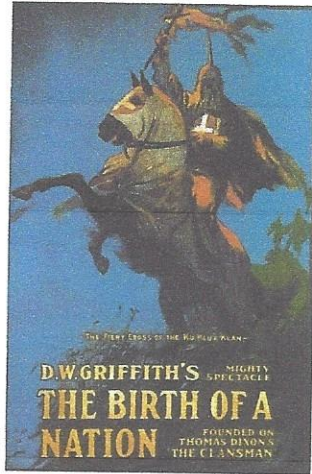
As Congress debated whether to give African Americans the right to vote, James Hinds, who was Caucasian, became the first sitting congressman to be murdered by a known Klansman. On October 22, 1868 Hinds, who represented Arkansas in the US House of Representatives, was shot in the back with a shotgun as he rode by on a horse. The murderer was a prominent Democrat who was furious that Hinds had encouraged large groups of former slaves to vote.

In a few Southern states, Republicans organized militia units to break up the Klan. The Arkansas militia of over 1,000 men was especially successful in pushing back against the KKK who was responsible for attacks against Republican officeholders and freedmen.

Union Army veterans in Blount County, Alabama organized "the anti-Ku Klux," and were successful in putting an end to the violence. Armed blacks formed their own defense in Bennettsville, South Carolina and patrolled the streets to protect their homes.

Finally, Republicans in Congress were able to pass three Civil Rights Acts in 1870 & 1871 (AKA: Ku Klux Klan Acts) which authorized President Grant to use military force to suppress the KKK and enable former slaves to exercise their new-found

rights. Nine South Carolina counties were placed under martial law and thousands were arrested. By 1871 all Klan chapters had disbanded.



The Second Klan – 1915 – 1944

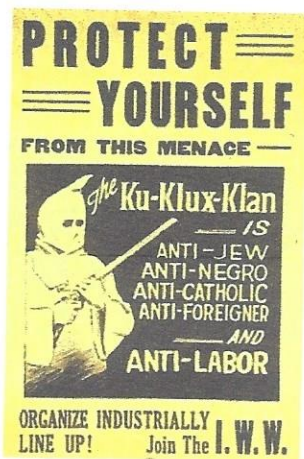
Historians believe the second creation of the KKK was sparked by the movie "Birth Of A Nation" which mythologized and glorified the first Klan. Two generations after the death of the first Klan, this version, established in Georgia, had a different agenda. Their grievances centered around anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic, Prohibitionist, anti-Communist, anti-Semitic hatred. They adopted the same regalia and secretive organizational structure as the first Klan, but many members made no effort to hide their faces. Unlike the original Klan, this version had a national structure which increased membership through advertisement.

Creation of this second Klan was encouraged by President Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921), a Democrat, when he held a screening of "Birth Of A Nation" in the White House. [The movie was originally entitled "The Clansman."] Wilson considered Negroes to be inferior and allowed Jim Crow laws to be implemented in Washington, DC. He also segregated federal employees by race beginning during his first months in office.

At the 1924 Democrat National Convention delegates proposed adding a plank to their platform condemning the KKK. It was defeated.

The second version of the Klan varied from the first in three major ways: 1) they were able to establish chapters outside the South, 2) although very few, the membership did contain some Republicans, and 3) they were less violent. What violence there was, was mostly aimed at both blacks and whites in the South for violations of "racial norms" and "moral lapses."

In addition to running charity drives and donating to Christian churches, the Klan beat African Americans, flogged Mexicans, threatened bootleggers, tarred and feathered abortion doctors and strong-armed politicians.



The Third Klan - 1950s and 1960s

The third version of the Klan developed as a response to the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s. This Klan was primarily made up of groups in the Southeast, and was aimed exclusively at black Americans. They had no national structure and consisted of small independent groups that adopted the same name, but had no formal relationships with each other. Like the Klan's second version, the great majority of its members were Democrats, some holding elective office, such as Senator Byrd.

During the years 1956-1964 three Democrat governors in the South, all Caucasians, initiated stand-offs to prevent school desegregation. They used local and state police to block school doors. In 1957 GOP President Dwight D. Eisenhower federalized the guard and sent 1,000 US Army troops to maintain order as Little Rock, Arkansas' high school desegregated.

Between 1951 and 1967 the Klan was involved in numerous bombings and murders. Civil rights activists, as well as innocents, were targeted. For example, on September 15, 1963 a church in Birmingham, Alabama was bombed, killing four girls. There were so many bombings in that city it became known as "Bombingham." Four Klansmen were later convicted of the bombing and the murders.



The Klan in 21st Century America

Although some of the media constantly feed false narratives about the KKK in Twenty-First Century America, these are the facts: 1) Klan groups are continuing a long-term trend of decline; 2) Most Klan members are not registered to vote, thus they are neither Democrat nor Republican; and 3) There are very few organized, planned acts of violence.

The Klan remains a collection of small, disjointed groups that continually change in name and leadership. Currently, researchers believe there are less than thirty Klan groups and about 3,000 Klan members nationwide.

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