

The Ku Klux Klan in America

What gave rise to the Ku Klux Klan in the 1860's & 1920's? Was it the combination of political and racial factors that have reappeared in today's America? Will the combination of these two factors again, make way for a resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan?



Ku Klux Klan march in the 1920's¹

¹ <http://www.discussionist.com/1015901035> last visited: (6.11.16)

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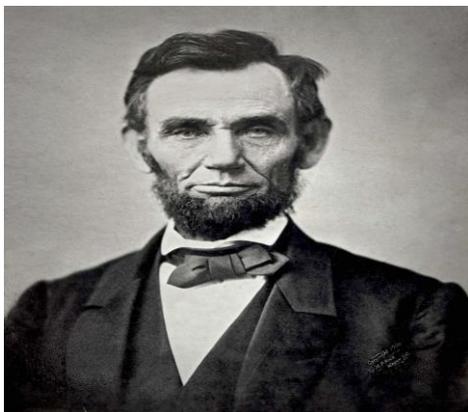
I. Introduction

a)

In 1865, the United States of America was enduring their fourth year of internal strife, known as the “Civil War”. It was a war fought between two sides: The Northern part of the U.S. (the Union) and the Southern part of the U.S. (the Confederates).

The leader of the Union at the time was the 16th President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln. He had many political views, but was very well known for his desire to abolish slavery. The South opposed the abolishment of slavery for many reasons, but mainly due to their large agricultural industry and the need for low cost or free labor.

The war finally came to a halt in 1865. “It was through the grapevine telegraph¹ that many slaves had learned about the Emancipation Proclamation, which President Abraham Lincoln had signed two years earlier, on January 1, 1863.”² This contract announced that all slaves were now declared free. In January 1865, as the North was dominating the war, Congress passed the Thirteenth Amendment, the abolishment of slavery across the United States.³



The 16th President of the U.S.A.⁴



Two opposing soldiers, fighting during the Civil War⁵

¹ The grapevine telegraph carried news, gossip, and rumors as it travelled its way informally from person to person, plantation to plantation. – Susan Bartoletti Campbell, THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE K.K.K., P.3

² Susan Campbell Bartoletti, THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE K.K.K., P.3

³ Ibid, P.3

⁴ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Abraham_Lincoln_November_1863.jpg last visited: (28.11.16)

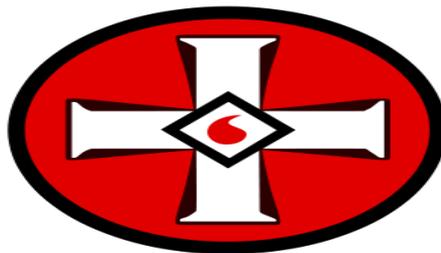
⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iDC8XAh-DIc> last visited: (28.11.16)

As the war was coming to an end, President Lincoln was assassinated. “[...]Lincoln would not live to guide the country through Reconstruction and a just and lasting peace. Just five days after Lee’s surrender, a Southern sympathizer gunned down the President.”¹ That day, the Vice President, Andrew Johnson, took the oath as President.”² This happened at a very important moment, considering he belonged to the same political party as most Southerners.

Meanwhile, white Southerners were beginning to understand the consequences that the loss of the war would have on them. Black people were on their way to becoming equal with their former white masters. This angered many white Southerners and contributed to the many reasons why the Ku Klux Klan was established.

The Klan was established by six Confederate soldiers in Pulaski, Tennessee. They had just lost the war and were angry at their defeat.³ The origin of the names comes from the word “kuklos” which means circle, or band, in Greek, from which they quickly derived it to “Ku Klux” and decided to add the “Klan” and the end to make it sound official.⁴ The inspiration of the name most likely came from a popular Southern fraternity.⁵ Historians disagree on whether they started the Klan as a social club to discuss the politics of the Reconstruction⁶ in the South or as a method to discriminate and regulate the lives of the freed slaves.⁷ Historians however agree that the Klan became more popular as the hatred for the blacks grew.⁸

Official Ku Klux Klan insignia⁹



¹ Susan Campbell Bartoletti, *THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE K.K.K.*, P.11

² *Ibid*, P.11 – Library of Congress

³ *Ibid*, P.13

⁴ WYN Craig Wade, *THE FIERY CROSS*, P.33 & Susan Campbell Bartoletti, *THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE K.K.K.*, P.25

⁵ *Ibid*, P.25

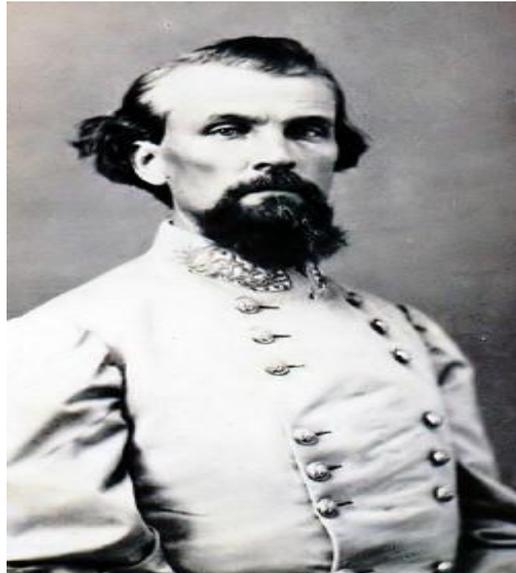
⁶ The period after the Civil War, 1865 - 1877, was called the Reconstruction period. Abraham Lincoln started planning for the reconstruction of the South during the Civil War as union soldiers occupied large areas of the South. - www.howard.edu/library/reference/guides/reconstructionera/default.htm last visited: (17.09.16)

⁷ Susan Campbell Bartoletti, *THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE K.K.K.*, P.34

⁸ *Ibid*, P.34

⁹ http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Ku_Klux_Klan last visited: (28.11.16)

The Klan would need a man to lead them through their time of violence and hatred. ““We chose General Forrest” said James R. Crowe, a founding Klansman.”¹ General Forrest was an intellectual Confederate soldier who instantly was captivated by the Klan movement. He decided that in order to make it properly function it would need a powerful leader. Now that the blacks had the right to vote, the majority were going to vote for their liberators, giving the Republicans immense popularity and giving them the power to oppress the racist social movement.² The Klan would eventually “officially” end in the 1870’s but never truly disappeared.



*Portrait of Nathan Bedford Forrest*³

The Klan’s resurgence occurred 50 years later in the midst of an immigration crisis leading to fear and hatred in the American people.⁴ More specifically, in 1915, William J. Simons was inspired by the famous movie, “Birth of a Nation”^{5,6} He reorganized what remained of prior Klan elements quickly.⁷ Now, they would be called the Invisible Empire of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

¹ Susan Campbell Bartoletti, THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE K.K.K., P.47

² Ibid, P.74

³ http://www.americancivilwar.com/south/Nathan_Bedford_Forrest.html last visited: (28.11.16)

⁴ http://archive.adl.org/learn/ext_us/kkk/history.html?LEARN_Cat=ExtremismLEARN_SubCat=Extremism_in_Americapicked=4item=kkk, last visited: (20.9.16)

⁵ Famous movie, depicting the K.K.K. in a positive way by the producer D.W. Griffith.

⁶ http://archive.adl.org/learn/ext_us/kkk/history.html?LEARN_Cat=ExtremismLEARN_SubCat=Extremism_in_Americapicked=4item=kkk last visited: (20.09.16)

⁷ Ibid, last visited: (20.09.16)

Many powerful politicians started to endorse the Klan, which also contributed to its popularity.¹ “This time the Klan added Catholics, Jews, immigrants, liberals, welfare recipients, and labor unions to their list of the hated.”² Their membership reached a peak in the 1920’s, with approximately 5 million members who shared white supremacist ideology.³ The Klan was able to thrive during the 1920’s but would eventually break down into small groups and become less and less popular, due to external opposition, which brought a collapse in membership.⁴

b)

When certain race and political conditions align to include a high degree of racism and a void of strong government leadership, hate groups flourish. I will specifically focus on the KKK as the key example of this phenomenon. Furthermore, I will look at these two political and racial conditions over time. I will also compare them and indicate why a resurgence is reoccurring today.

Drawing of the original Ku Klux Klan⁵



¹http://archive.adl.org/learn/ext_us/kkk/history.html?LEARN_Cat=ExtremismLEARN_SubCat=Extremism_in_Americapicked=4item=kkk last visited: (20.09.16)

² Susan Campbell Bartoletti, THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE K.K.K., P.147-148

³ Ibid, P.147-148

⁴ “Second KKK” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ku_Klux_Klan#Second_KKK last visited: (17.09.16)

⁵ <http://www.f169bbs.com/bbs/news/129359-true-history-of-the-ku-klux-klan> last visited: (28.11.16)

c)

I have many personal interests in this subject. First, the K.K.K. is part of the history of the United States and, as a US citizen, I have often been fascinated by subjects related to the history of the U.S. Secondly, there are many racial problems in our day to day life. I fully expect that by studying the K.K.K. I will gain a deeper knowledge about racism, which is a topic that I am very curious about because, having grown up in an international and quiet city, I feel as though I have been insulated from the tension in the United States. Finally, I chose this subject because from the information that I have gathered so far, I am certain that this terrorist group will rise again, thus making my T.M. a timely subject.

II. Factors that made way for the establishment of the Ku Klux Klan in the United States of America from 1865 to 1875.

a) The race issues going on in America at the time.

i. Loss of the Civil War.

Now that the war¹ was over, Lincoln was in charge and the former slaves were now free but this freedom would not last for long. For many Southerners this liberation was extremely confusing to them. "Racism was deeply embedded in white society[...]. It would take many years for white Americans to understand what freedom meant for black Americans."² With the Blacks being free, panic and frustration spread all throughout the South. For white Southerners, being on "the bottom rail" of society and the blacks being equal or even above them would be the worst type of embarrassment. This racial confusion and the loss of the war led to many problems, including the creation of the first Ku Klux Klan.

The Southern states were now devastated economically because of this Northern defeat. The main economic activity in the South was farming. These farmers had had free slave labor for generations, which allowed them to make substantial profits. Now, because the slaves were free, many of the wealthy former slave owners were forced to find some other way to live. In

¹ The Civil war was a horrific war fought between the Union and the Confederate sides. After four long years, the North (the Union) had won. President Lincoln was in charge at the time and had finally emancipated the black slaves all across the country.

² Susan Campbell Bartoletti, THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE K.K.K, P.7

short, many Southerners who were once wealthy were now indigent. For example, an ex-Mississippi slave owner describes his economic devastation after the loss of his slaves.¹

The poverty-stricken Southerners needed someone to blame for their hardships. When Southerners realized what this defeat meant, many tended to blame the freed blacks. They reasoned that the war was fought to free the slaves, and their forced emancipation meant economic ruin for the South. Despite the fact that many freedmen had done nothing wrong, the outrage of the loss was taken out on them.

Another important factor is that after the war, many freed blacks left to join the Northerners.² As one expert says; “White masters were particularly embittered over the fact that their ever-faithful household slaves were the first to leave.”³ White Southerners felt as though their former slaves were traitors and that they had abandoned them. This feeling of abandonment after the war was an important social factor. These actions taken by the freedmen were natural and likely the intelligent choice, but deeply angered their former masters. This sense of betrayal, triggered many white men to join the first racist American terrorist group.

A different argument to take into consideration is that the end of the Civil War meant many things but most importantly, freedom for the blacks. This important historic moment, like every change, had consequences. Now that the emancipated blacks were no longer slaves, they were free to do as they pleased for a short period of time.⁴ Even though, they were considered “free”, many Southerners expected them to behave the same way as they had before the war, as inferiors.⁵ Naturally, many blacks did not accept this Southern mentality which would lead to an increase in tension between the two races.

¹ “We came out of the war utterly broken up, we lost all our stock, the slaves were emancipated[...]. Another Southern Woman indicated: “We had all our earnings swept away, the Government of the U.S. has the credit of giving the black man his freedom, while it was at the expense of the Southern people.” - Susan Campbell Bartoletti, *THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE K.K.K.*, P.8

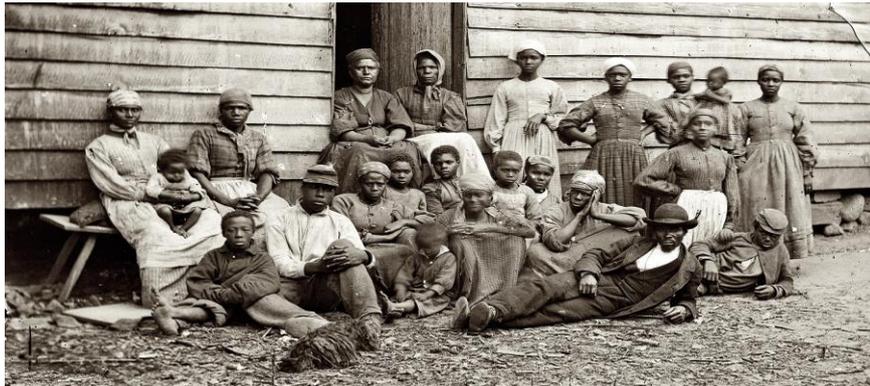
² “When Northern armies had invaded the South shortly before the end of the war, slaves fled the plantations in droves to join up with the liberating Yankees” - Wyn Craig Wade, *THE FIERY CROSS*, PROLOGUE, P.12

³ Ibid

⁴ Before the Ku Klux Klan or the black codes (Jim Crow laws) etc.

⁵ Wyn Craig Wade, *THE FIERY CROSS*, PROLOGUE, P.19

The freedmen were liberated, but were expected to behave as though they were still slaves. However, many did not, which further angered the white men. The fact that the blacks were free and were being “insolent”¹ was for some Southerners a direct threat to them. Correspondingly, now that the blacks were free they could compete with the whites economically. As mentioned earlier, not only were the whites devastated by the loss of the war, they would now have to compete with black farmers trying to make a living of their own.²



*Picture taken of the freedmen after the War*³

There was another threat that was infuriating the white Southerners, former slaves seeking education. This education allowed the newly freed blacks to begin to acquire jobs that were typically reserved to the higher social classes. “They worried that educated black Americans would move into better jobs and professions, eventually taking jobs away from white people.”⁴ The white Southerners felt justified in taking action against blacks seeking education. They very likely perceived it as a direct attack on their well-being and economic security. For example, William Luke, who was a teacher, teaching racial equality and basic life

¹ “insolent” to the white Southerners because they didn’t want to be treated as though they were still slaves. For example, Jim Williams, a captain of an all-black militia company, was being force to surrender his guns to the white Southerners, Williams refused because he wanted to protect his family and himself and had every right to have guns under the 2nd Amendment. He was found the next day hung from a tree. - Susan Campbell Bartoletti, *THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE K.K.K.*, P.134

² As a former slave explains what the blacks faced after emancipation, “After freedom, we worked on shares a while. Then we rented. When we worked on shares, we couldn’t make nothing, just overalls and something to eat. Half went to the other man and you would destroy your half if you weren’t careful.” What can be interpreted here is that whenever the blacks started to become successful and competitive economically, their crops would be destroyed. - <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6377/> last visited: (19.11.16)

³ <http://www.abolitionseminar.org/who-freed-the-slaves/> last visited: (28.11.16)

⁴ Susan Campbell Bartoletti, *THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE K.K.K.*, P.96-97

skills to his black students was lynched and beaten shortly after having refused to put an end to his teaching.¹

ii. Southern mentality.

Although the end of the Civil War led racist mentalities to grow, it is important to realize that slavery in America had existed for hundreds of years before the Civil War. The first slaves were brought to America as far back as 1619. For most Southerners, having slaves, and the very concept of slavery, was “normal”. “William Loughton Smith of South Carolina announced that slavery had become ‘so engrafted’ on the South, that its abolition would utterly destroy Southern “happiness, tranquility, and prosperity”.”² With many people of this mindset, it was not difficult for a hate group to gain traction and rise.

Not only was racial superiority embedded in the white Southern mentality³, now that they had to live amongst the blacks without any social distinction the tension was on the rise and it was especially felt in areas where the Southerners were poor and uneducated. Where the white Southerners were rich, there was a very existent social distinction because the blacks had little wealth, having just been freed. Whereas, in areas where the white Southerners were poor, there were more problems because they were actually closer to each other from a social class perspective. These poor, uneducated white Southerners were the ones who were most likely to join a hate group that would attempt to take action against this newly imposed racial equality.⁴

A final reason why the racist Southern mentality led to the creation of the Ku Klux Klan was nothing other than the notion of fear. Southerners had robbed the blacks of their free lives for hundreds of years. Not only were the blacks forced to work daily for free, many were

¹ Susan Campbell Bartoletti, THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE K.K.K., P.96

² Wyn Craig Wade, THE FIERY CROSS, PROLOGUE, P.11

³ Susan Campbell Bartoletti, THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE K.K.K., P.7

⁴ Ulysses S. Grant passed the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871, which authorized the government to prosecute crimes taken out by groups like the K.K.K. This happened 6 years after the creation of the Klan because many hate crimes taken out on African Americans were never investigated nor were the perpetrators prosecuted. - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lynching_in_the_United_States#Reconstruction .281865.E2.80.931877.29 last visited: (25.11.16)

mistreated, beaten and the women raped by their white masters.¹ These actions were most likely never brought to justice and were justified because they belonged to them.

Now that the blacks were free, they could finally escape from this abuse. However, this freedom caused fear in the lives of not only their former masters but any Southerner who was guilty of having mistreated the black race. They now feared for their own lives and were not about to allow themselves to be as vulnerable as the blacks once were.² “[...] when the slaves were emancipated, white men realized with horror that the black “buck” was free to do to their women what they had done to his.”³ This fear led to even more tension between the two races.

Additionally, many whites were afraid because in many places the blacks outnumbered them. “Before the war, Giles County had been a major slave-holding region, and blacks made up nearly half the population. After the war, the freedom of so many blacks made whites extremely nervous- especially after the Memphis riot⁴ of May 1866.”⁵ These quotes clearly illustrate the unjust mentality of the white men at the time and can lead one to understand why this fear was a sufficient reason for xenophobic white Southerners to join a racist organization.

b) The political divisiveness at the time.

i. Opposition between the Democrats and the Republicans.

From a political point of view, it is important to understand that most Southerners shared views of the Democratic party, as opposed to the Northerners, who were generally Republicans. After the victory of the North, the Republicans were in control of the Southern states and they were the ones who were going to decide the future for the South. This process,

¹ “Treatment was generally characterized by brutality, degradation, and inhumanity. Whippings, executions, and rapes were commonplace, and slaves were usually denied educational opportunities, such as learning how to read or write.” - <https://www.boundless.com/u-s-history/textbooks/boundless-u-s-history-textbook/slavery-in-the-antebellum-u-s-1820-1840-16/slavery-in-the-u-s-122/treatment-of-slaves-in-the-united-states-652-9460/> last visited: (18.11.16)

² Wyn Craig Wade, THE FIERY CROSS, PROLOGUE, P.21

³ Ibid

⁴ The Memphis riots of 1866 were the violent events that occurred after the civil war. The racial violence was ignited by political, social and racial tensions between the whites and the blacks. -

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memphis_riots_of_1866 last visited: (18.11.16)

⁵ Wyn Craig Wade, THE FIERY CROSS, P.32

would lead to many problems because of the great distinctions between the two parties. Many people strongly believed that the Democrats should have political authority, due to their majority in the South. One can imagine, with a Democratic majority in the South, they were the ones who thought that they knew better about how to function politically.

Despite this point of view, the Republicans had the power and demanded that any Southerner who wanted to gain the right to vote again, had to travel to Washington D.C. and ask for forgiveness.¹ “It angered them (the whites) that men who were nobodies (the blacks) before the war could vote but important men like themselves could not until they were officially pardoned.”² This situation was very delicate because the freed slaves were not only angering poor white farmers but were now angering wealthy politicians who could do something about it. Not to mention that; “Political affiliation was the key factor to Klan membership, and all Klansmen were sympathetic to the Democratic party.”³ We can deduct from this that these Democratic politicians with little power inside the occupying government of the North were perhaps motivated to focus their time and energy on another activity. This illegal activity could allow them to obtain what they wanted, but had been denied as a result of the loss of the war, property and power. This activity would be the participation in the K.K.K.

Furthermore, something that angered white Southerners was that now, the black man’s vote was equal to the white man’s vote, a colossal change in American society, but not a pleasant one for many Southerners. In terms of population in the South, in some specific areas the freed slaves were very dominant, which meant their vote had a strong impact on an election. Most freedmen voted for their liberators, the Republicans. Without the vote of their former slaves, the Democratic party would be powerless. “[...] many Democratic candidates for local office realized they needed the vote of their former slaves in order to win.”⁴ Most blacks were not going to vote for their former “owners”. Southern Democrats saw a solution, take the black vote by force.

¹ Susan Campbell Bartoletti, *THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE K.K.K.*, P.38

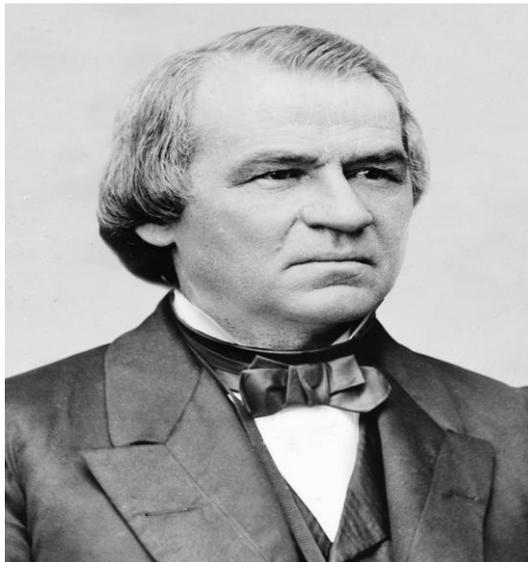
² *Ibid*, P.18

³ Wyn Craig Wade, *THE FIERY CROSS*, P.57

⁴ Susan Campbell Bartoletti, *THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE K.K.K.*, P.65

ii. Death of Abraham Lincoln, new President Andrew Johnson.

This dominating Republican rule did not last long. President Lincoln's, Vice President, Andrew Johnson, was quickly sworn in and was a Democrat.¹ Johnson had sided with Union during the war, but decided to sympathize with the South during Reconstruction.² This turn of events, would change everything that Lincoln had fought for.³ President Johnson would pass the Black Codes, which severely restrained the lives of the blacks yet again. This was ideal for Southern Democrats because they knew that the new President would side with them. However, for the recently freed blacks, this was terrible news. Not only were the blacks facing hatred from white Southerners, they did not enjoy much protection from the government anymore. This gradual change in power allowed, once again, the development of a racist ideology. Southerners who were starting to give up on civil society and to resort to illegal violence, now had hope of fulfilling their racist ideology legally. The presidency of Andrew Johnson was important for the development of the K.K.K. because it gave a defeated Democratic South hope.



Portrait of the 17th President of the U.S.A.⁴

In the months that followed, President Johnson was accused of trying to return the blacks to slavery.⁵ Congress, which had a Republican majority, quickly took control of the situation and invalidated the Black Codes and passed a set of Reconstruction Acts. These

¹ Susan Campbell Bartoletti THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE K.K.K, P.11 & 18

² Ibid

³ In this context, specifically, the freedom of the African Americans.

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Johnson last visited: (28.11.16)

⁵ Susan Campbell Bartoletti, THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE K.K.K, P.21

actions taken by the Republicans clearly indicated the rights that the freedman had as new citizens of the U.S. The Southern Democrats finally thought that their time of “suffering” was over, but it clearly was not. The Republicans implemented what Lincoln had tried to do for his whole life with little success.

After the Southern Democrats learned of the new laws, it was another blow to their Democrat campaign and was a clear indication that they were not going to get what they wanted politically. “It was this overturn of governments that made the Ku Klux Klan an important force in Southern life.”¹ The Klan became a terrorist group that would enforce its political and social views with violence and intimidation, especially over the newly freed blacks.

Ultimately, another reason why the K.K.K. rose from a political perspective, was their strong leadership all across the South. Even though, the Democrats might not have had much power politically, their leaders were well educated and had lots of influence over people. This strong leadership role, was an important factor to the rise of the Ku Klux Klan. “Prominent Southern gentlemen were later cited as state leaders of the Invisible Empire. [...] Arkansas was headed by General Albert Pike, explorer and poet. North Carolina was led by former governor Zebulon Vance, and Georgia by General John B. Gordon, later a U.S. senator.”² Throughout history, an important Klan characteristic to remember is that, each time that they gain momentum, they have a powerful leader guiding them or powerful political endorsements. Without this, it is not likely that they would have had as much success.

c) Interim conclusion and summary of 1865 to 1875.

i. How Racism and government converged, helping the establishment of the K.K.K.

In summary, racially infused tensions, combined with political and economic uncertainty, contributed to the establishment of the first Ku Klux Klan. The combination of the end of the war, the freedom of slaves, the economic devastation of Southerners and the political unrest, had a large impact on society. For a white Southerner, it seemed as though

¹ David M. Chalmers, HOODED AMERICANISM, P.11 [...] “In practically every one of the states in which the Klan rode, it sprang or expanded into active life with the advent of the new Radical governments of 1867 and 1868.”

² Wyn Craig Wade, THE FIERY CROSS, P.58. Not to mention, that the President (most powerful position) at the time was Andrew Johnson, a radical Democrat that was on the Southern side.

wherever they looked, something was threatening them and pushing against their principles. Many of them felt trapped because they were being oppressed by a “radical government”. Southerners felt naturally superior as a result of their slaveholding history, and politically they now felt oppressed. Moreover, something to take note of is that the white Southerners, yes, had been living amongst the blacks as slaves but it was not until their liberation that the whites became xenophobic.

III. The resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan in the United States of America between 1915 and 1930.

b) The race issues going on in America at the time.

i. The movie “Birth of a Nation”.

My analysis now moves on from the early years of the KKK’s formation to a second period of its activity in American history, the years between 1919 and 1930. Similar to the first phase of activity (1860s), this was a time of great turmoil and social unrest in the U.S., thus giving the Klan another opportunity to gain momentum and popularity. Waves of immigrants were arriving, there was political divisiveness and job insecurity. As tension was rising, all that it would take for the Klan to take off would be a bewildering motion picture.

The resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan was due to many racial factors, but the decisive factor was the affect that the famous movie, *Birth of a Nation* had on American society. “A technical masterpiece that was often factually inaccurate, The Birth of a Nation was ultimately viewed by more than fifty million people and had a vast influence in the shaping of popular misconceptions about the Reconstruction[...]¹ The movie was inspired by a book called *The Clansman*.² When the director D.W. Griffith’s released his film it caused astonishment in the white communities and outrage in the black communities. The film was set out to show the “reality” of the Reconstruction era. Not only did the movie portray blacks as brutes, criminals and rapists, it portrayed the Ku Klux Klan in a heroic way. In fact, the hero of the movie is a

¹ Kenneth T. Jackson, THE KU KLUX KLAN IN THE CITY, P.3

² Wyn Craig Wade, THE FIERY CROSS, P.122

Klansman. As this movie was shocking America, an old but familiar hate group was now on the rise.¹

The movie motivated a group of white Southern men in Georgia to light a cross on the top of Stone Mountain, Georgia, in 1915.² This was all led by William J. Simmons. This, for Simmons, was the ceremonial revival of the Klan.³ “This time they added Catholics, Jews, immigrants, liberals, welfare recipients, and labor unions to their list of hates.”⁴ This expanded “list”, was an important element to their popularity.



Portrait of William J. Simmons⁵

If we take a closer look at why this movie was a critical factor to the resurgence of the Klan we will find that most of the arguments are again linked to embedded racism present in American society. The critical problem was lack of awareness of education in a largely rural and farming American society. “Lack of education”, meaning the lack of knowledge about the actual events that took place after the Civil War. People were not very aware of what really had happened 50 years before. There were very limited ways of sharing news. This was before TV’s, and only the more privileged had access to decent libraries and good education.⁶ Important sources of information for people were films shown in the local movie theatres. “In an astonishing few months, Griffith’s masterpiece had united white Americans in a vast national

¹ Wyn Craig Wade, THE FIERY CROSS, P.122

² Nancy MacLean, BEHIND THE MASK OF CHIVALRY, P.5

³ Susan Campbell Bartoletti, THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE K.K.K, P.147-148

⁴ Ibid

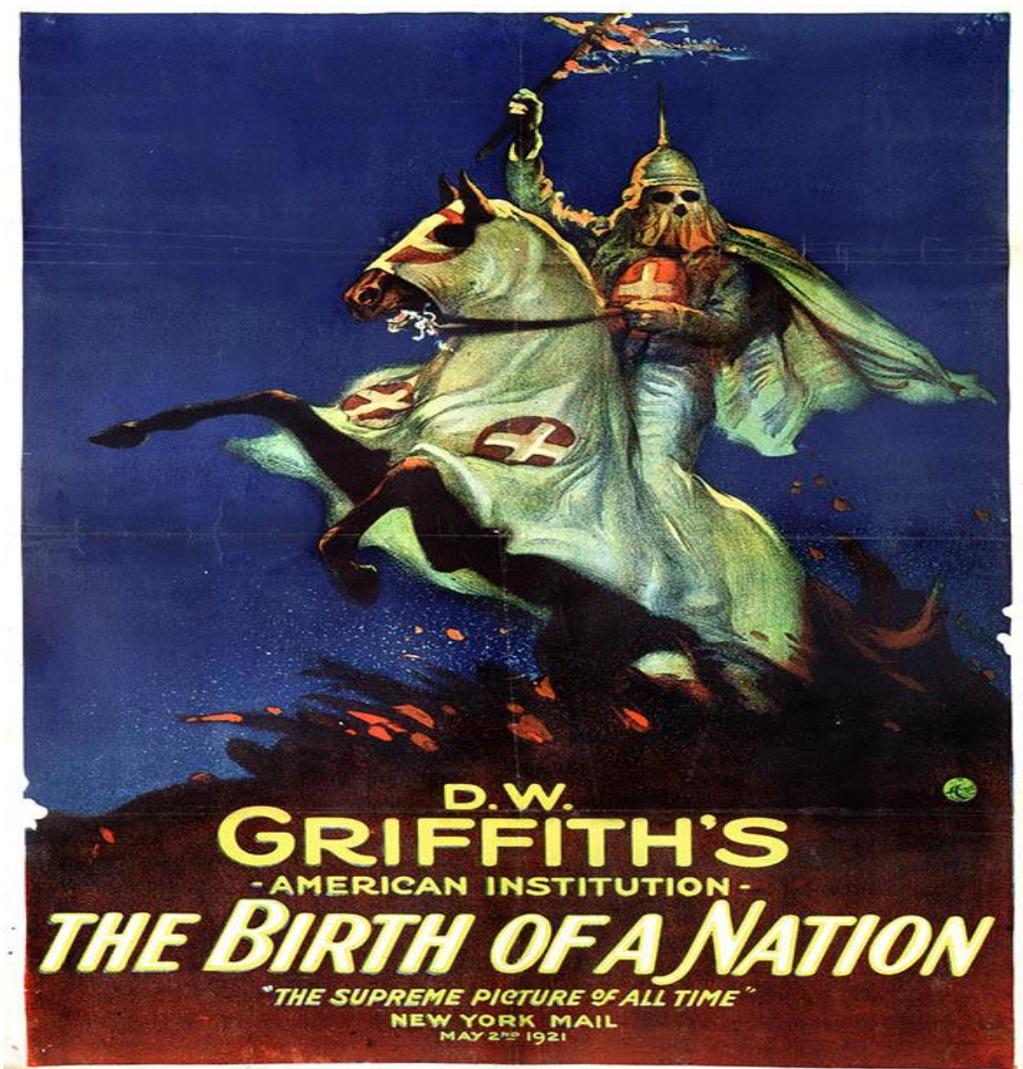
⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Joseph_Simmons last visited: (28.11.16)

⁶ As mentioned earlier, education in the South was always a fight. Many Southerners did not see it the way that the North saw it. This resulted in many children being taught fallacious elements about the Reconstruction of the South.

drama, convincing them of a past that had never been.”¹ He was able to indoctrinate many Americans.

Griffith’s film manipulated many American’s, encouraging hostility towards blacks. They were led to believe that the black man was bad and the Klansman a hero. If historians had truthfully represented the Reconstruction era and the Klan, the Klan would have had “a much harder time generating the public interest and sympathy necessary for its growth.”² This shows the impact that this movie had on the Klan’s popularity. This inaccurate interpretation of history

*D.W. Griffith’s movie, The Birth of a Nation*³



¹ Wyn Craig Wade, THE FIERY CROSS, P.139

² Ibid, P.254

³http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/history/2015/03/the_birth_of_a_nation_how_the_fight_to_censor_d_w_griffith_s_film_shaped.html last visited: (28.11.16)

reflected in the film had severe consequences on the black communities (beatings, cross burnings and lynchings).

To further bolster the credibility of Griffith's film, the U.S. President at the time, Woodrow Wilson, endorsed the film, as did many others.¹ "He took an immediate liking to the movie and said: "it is like writing history with lightning and my only regret is that it is all so terribly true.""² Even the leader of the country had fallacious conceptions of the past.³

Secondly, the movie generated a large amount of fear from an inaccurate source. The people whom went along with it, now exhibited a renewed hostility towards the blacks. Many Americans were profoundly affected by the film.⁴ As a man said after leaving the theater, "It makes me want to go out and kill the first Negro I see [...] Others wondered aloud whether their ancestors had fought on the wrong side during the war."⁵ We can thus visualize what the American people were feeling and how fear was starting to emerge in American society. The xenophobia felt after the release of this film was similar to the one during Reconstruction, due to the movie.⁶

In conclusion, this movie had a strong effect on the average American citizen by not only convincing them of a past that had never been, but also by stimulating fear of blacks amongst many people.⁷ *Birth of a Nation*, increased hatred towards blacks, made people believe in a false history and convinced people that black people really needed to be controlled.⁸ All these elements, from the movie, resulted in the resurgence and popularity of the 1920's Ku Klux Klan.

¹ David M. Chalmers, HOODED AMERICANISM, P.26-27

² Wyn Craig Wade, THE FIERY CROSS, P.126

³ This can lead one to think that if, even the most important person in the country had false conceptions of the Reconstruction, it is most likely that many others did too.

⁴ Wyn Craig Wade, THE FIERY CROSS, P.138

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Wyn Craig Wade, THE FIERY CROSS, P.138. Wyn Craig Wade. "A "Ku-Klux fever," similar to that of the Reconstruction, was revived in the North."

⁷ Ibid, P.139

⁸ Inside the Ku Klux Klan, documentary. Last visited: (1.11.16)

ii. A wider target of hate.

This era was an extremely stressful time in the United States. Not only did *Birth of a Nation* essentially indoctrinate many people into believing false elements about the Reconstruction, immigration was on the rise which further contributed to peoples' fear of being dominated by other races and religions. This would eventually give powerful momentum to the Klan. This "wider target of hate" (new immigrant groups) was a recruiting technique that they were going to use in their favor.

In the 1920's, the U.S. economy was booming and this attracted many immigrants looking for work. These "new arrivals" on American territory would have many consequences for American society. However, the key ones that lead to a resurgence of the Klan were the threats that immigrants posed to a "white American society" and the fact that many were coming for jobs. This could potentially increase unemployment and depressing salaries of the American working class.¹

As many Americans felt as though their country was functioning well and did not want change, these new arrivals caused fear in many citizens and prompted discriminatory action. In the 1920's, many Americans felt invaded because immigrants were growing in numbers.² "There was a strong feeling that they wanted to restore America and the Klan promise them that."³ This shows how people were growing more and more fearful of arriving immigrants, not to mention that many whites already treated blacks with fear and hatred, even though they were citizens. This fear of change and immigrants is terribly familiar to the Southern white xenophobia that was felt after the emancipation of the blacks in the 1860's. In these two instances, when change and immigration was imposed on Americans, many people felt as though the Klan was a solution. Xenophobia was a crucial factor for the establishment and the

¹ Often, wave of immigrants put many people out of work, why? Immigrants are often satisfied with working for cheap labor, because they are going to make much more than in their country of origin anyway. This puts the locals out of the work because there is an increase in competition and immigrants are often willing to work for less. It is in the employer's best interest to hire cheap workers.

² Inside the Ku Klux Klan, documentary. Last visited: (1.11.16)

³ Ibid

resurgence of the Klan during both periods examined and could well be one for the present Klan.

Many American citizens were not only worried about “the protection of American values”¹, but also the direct consequences that immigrants could have on society. People feared the overcrowding of immigrants and the competition for jobs. The Klan was going to be the solution to these problems. The Klan used smart propaganda tactics which reassured people in areas where there was job concern, that they would take action. Such as the fact that they, “pandered to every regional prejudice and fear, offering a scapegoat for every local tension.”² The Ku Klux Klan also professed the ideology that white Americans deserved the best jobs and positions in society since white men were the founding fathers.³ For people that were desperate and fearful of this mass immigration, it was a very clear and simple solution to join the Klan, because they believed the Klan would do something about it.⁴

World War I Armistice came on November 11th, 1918 and put thousands out of work across the U.S. Before this, there was a labor boom causing many blacks to migrate North in search of better jobs.⁵ When the boom ended, the blacks; “were now regarded as dangerous and loathsome competition by Northern whites who were just beginning to discover the depths of their racism.”⁶ Fear of jobs was enough of an incentive for local citizens to quickly become hostile to the new arrivals. This direct effect that immigrants had on job security had a substantial impact on social issues. To link this argument back to the original establishment of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1860’s, a large part of the reason the K.K.K. was created back then was due to the liberation of the blacks and their freedom to earn money. They were viewed as competition, resulting in the hate of insecure and desperate people.

The rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the 20’s was extremely similar to the rise of the Klan in the 1860’s in many ways, but one difference that stands out is the fact that the second Klan

¹ David M. Chalmers, HOODED AMERICANISM, P.2

² Wyn Craig Wade, THE FIERY CROSS, P.156

³ Brian Tackett, INSIDE THE KLU KLUX KLAN, P.17

⁴ People believed that the Klan would do something about it because of their violent history and their violent propaganda.

⁵ Wyn Craig Wade, THE FIERY CROSS, P.151

⁶ Ibid

added more ethnicities and religions to their list of the hated.¹ By expanding their list of the hated, this created many new targets. Now people who wanted to participate in this racist and discriminatory movement in the 20's did not have to look hard for a specific group to attack. The Klan basically covered it all. This new tactic allowed people of all different backgrounds to join in the fight against not only blacks but also Catholics, Jews and immigrants. This allowed for an increase in the Klan memberships as opposed to smaller hate groups with only one target. By widening their list of "the hated" the Klan was able to grow into an extremely large hate and terrorist group throughout the 20's.

b) The political divisiveness that was going on at the time.

i. Opposition between the Democrats and the Republicans.

The political divisiveness was immensely significant at this point in time. It meant that many citizens were confused and did not know which political party to side with. Although Reconstruction was over, its impact would continue to affect the 1920's. "In the years after Reconstruction ended, Democrats continued to regain control throughout the South often through violent means. In state after state, they enacted new laws, called Jim Crow laws, that stripped away the political and civil rights of black Americans."² What differs is that this time the Democrats were not being oppressed, it was the exact opposite, they were very popular because of their discriminatory views. What happened was that in the 1860's the Democrats were so oppressed that people started to join the Klan to counter this opposition, but in the 20's they were so powerful that it became a popular party to trust and for which to vote.

Now, that the Democrats had this support, it was easy for them to gain even more support. Leaders started using propaganda techniques to cause fear and anger amongst citizens, blaming the minorities for the economic and social problems. This act of blaming the minorities for societies problems helped gain the party support, because as mentioned in the 1860's, when society is faced with problems, people want someone to blame. They also used the fear of the people by making statements that the immigrants were dangerous and

¹ Chalmers M. David, HOODED AMERICANISM, P.5

² Susan Campbell Bartoletti, THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE K.K.K, P.144. "The Jim Crow laws kept the lives of black Americans segregated and unequal in the South."

taking all the jobs.¹ They promised that they were going to take legal action against these target and the Klan promised illegal action to oppress the immigrants physically. As the Klan was essentially a sub-category of the Democrat Party in the 1920s (the 1924 Democrat Convention platform endorsed lynching)², supporting one increased support of the other.³



Picture of the 1924 Democratic Convention⁴

ii. Endorsement of Truman and many other political figures.

The most important reason why the Klan was able to gain so much support throughout the 20's was due to the immense popularity of the Democratic party, but specifically the endorsement of powerful politicians. Many influential Democrats held public office and a good number of them were racist and actual Klansmen themselves. For example, an indicator of the mindset of US leadership was President Wilson's endorsement of the movie *Birth of a Nation*. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Edward D. White also publically supported this movie and was at one point a member of the Klan.⁵ This demonstrates how popular and visible many racist Democrats were at the time.

The Klan monopolized politics in many places.⁶ The ultimate aspiration for the Klan was when the nation saw President Warren G. Harding agreeing to be sworn in as a member of the

¹ "They are coming in such numbers and we are unable adequately to take care of them...It simply amounts to unrestricted and indiscriminate dumping into this country of people of every character and description...If there were in existence a ship that could hold three million human beings, then three million Jews of Poland would board to escape to America." -Congressional hearing, 1920 - <http://defendingthetruth.com/immigration/16559-10-historical-anti-immigrant-quotes-sound-familiar.html> last visited: (20.11.16)

² David M. Chalmers, HOODED AMERICANISM, P.5

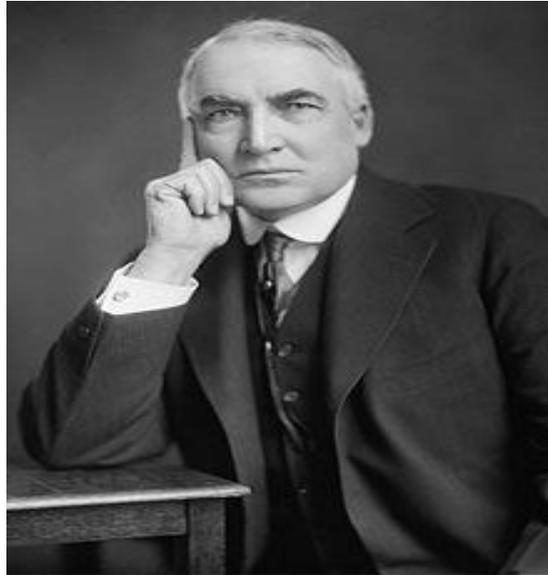
³ Ibid

⁴ <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/contested-conventions-time/story?id=38251668> last visited: (28.11.16)

⁵ Wyn Craig Wade, THE FIERY CROSS, P.126

⁶ Inside the Ku Klux Klan, documentary.

Ku Klux Klan.¹ Even the Commander in Chief was a Klansman. We've seen this in the 1860's, in order for the Klan to gain popularity it needs a powerful and persuasive leader, or in this case, the endorsement of powerful politicians.



Picture of the 27th President of the U.S.A., Warren G. Harding²

The Democrat party was in many cases supporting the Klan. This led many people to join hate groups like the K.K.K. As a consequence, the Klan started to expand, becoming one of the largest hate groups to ever have existed in America. This immense Klan popularity led to new politicians many times being forced to endorse the Klan if they hoped to be elected. "You could not run for public office in some places unless you had the Klan endorsement and Klan support because it had this enormous membership."³ It also had the support of non-members, regular citizens, who did not condemn the horrific acts of the Klan but thought it served a good role in society. This is how many people came to support the Klan and it was a vicious circle. In short, the endorsement of many powerful and influential leaders such as Wilson and Harding allowed the Klan to rise and to gain power.

c) Interim conclusion and summary of 1915 to 1930.

i. How Racism and government converged, helping the resurgence of the K.K.K.

¹ Wyn Craig Wade, THE FIERY CROSS, P.165

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warren_G._Harding last visited: (28.11.16)

³ Inside the Ku Klux Klan documentary.

After having looked at the factors that made the Klan resurge in the 1920's one can notice that it was again due to the fact that the racial and political factors beneficial to the Klan, as discussed above, converged around the same time.

With the release of the "epic" movie *Birth of a Nation*, the fear of newly arriving immigrants and the immense support of the Klan politically, the resurgence was practically inevitable. Another consideration is the similarity in the factors present in society that led to the rise of the Klan during both periods examined. Each had strong and influential leadership, and each had large populations that were xenophobic to new arrivals trying to integrate into society. The presence of such factors in both periods in U.S. history when the Klan arose should lead one to ask: are these racial and political issues present in today's society? If they are, could there be another resurgence of the Klan today?

Ku Klux Klan parade in the capital, 1926¹



¹ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2100077/Ku-Klux-Klan-Extraordinary-images-divisive-era-capture-day-reckoning-50-000-white-supremacists-marched-Washington-DC.html> last visited: (28.11.16)

190 active KKK groups, with between 5,000 and 8,000 Klan members in the United States.¹ The Klan memberships of the 1920's cannot compare, in terms of numbers, to the Klan memberships of today. However, the memberships are in fact increasing rather quickly.² We can observe this recent increase in Klan activity with the graph below:



"The course of the modern Ku Klux Klan"³



Modern Ku Klux Klan rally⁴

¹ <http://www.attn.com/stories/6255/how-big-kkk-is-2016> last visited: (13.11.16)

² Refer to image #1: <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2016/active-hate-groups-united-states-2015#klan> last visited on: (22.11.16)

³ <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2016/active-hate-groups-united-states-2015#klan> last visited on: (13.11.16)

⁴ <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/516295544757077278/> last visited: (28.11.16)

ii. Their modern desires and propaganda.

What is important to understand with the Ku Klux Klan is that it has many branches in many different areas. What is known is that its members are still racist and discriminate against many different ethnicities.¹ For example, recently in California, “Fliers that were signed ‘KKK’ and depicted prominent black activists Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton hanging from a tree were distributed in a neighborhood.”² Another form of intimidation by the K.K.K. has surfaced in New York where “a man wearing a shirt with KKK and Nazi insignias was charged with a hate crime for the second time since April involving an attack on a Hispanic male.”³ With these examples, we can see that the K.K.K. has targeted the same ethnicities throughout history.⁴ However, its members now also target Latinos and Muslims and anyone who is not a white Christian. Overall, while many of its targets are similar to those of the earlier periods examined, what has changed is that today, there are new types of immigrants, creating new minorities for the Klan to “hate”. Here is technique that the Klan used in the 1860’s: “[...]The Klan opened up the collective unconscious of the inhabitants where it arose and tapped primitive, pagan sources to bear upon the frustrations of the present.”⁵ This is exactly what it is doing in the present. When problems appear in society involving a specific minority, the Klan finds a way to adapt and expand its hate list, thus creating more members and support for the Klan. The proof today is that the Klan now also targets Hispanics, Muslims and refugees because other white Americans are feeling xenophobic towards them.⁶

In terms of propaganda, there are hundreds of incidents that have been reported on the Southern Poverty Law Center website of Ku Klux Klan fliers being distributed in neighborhoods in many states. For example, fliers from the Loyal White Knights of the KKK were distributed in

¹ Not all dens share the exact same ideology, but they are similar in the sense that they resemble the ideology of their founding fathers. The Klan ideology also depends on the where it is situated geographically. Not every Klan shares the exact same social problems because of their location, but generally speaking, they do. - <https://mic.com/articles/121628/7-facts-about-the-kkk-operating-in-america-today#.sU3TLShI5> last visited: (15.11.16)

² https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/hate-incidents?keyword=kkk&f0=field_hate_incident_type%3A11 last visited: (13.11.16)

³ https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/hate-incidents?keyword=kkk&f0=field_hate_incident_type%3A11 last visited: (13.11.16)

⁴ As in Jews, African Americans, Catholics.

⁵ Wyn Craig Wade, THE FIERY CROSS, P.43

⁶ Seventy percent of Americans believe undocumented immigrants threaten traditional U.S. beliefs and customs, according to the Reuters/Ipsos poll. - <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-immigration-worries-idUSKBN0G70BE20140807> last visited: (24.11.16)

a neighborhood in West Virginia.¹ The fliers usually indicate their ideology, urging people to join due to the present social and political problems. Below is an image of a recent, actual Klan membership application.



Loyal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan

Membership Application

Mail to PO Box 275, Leasburg, NC 27291

Your application must be mailed in by you **ONLY**.
We are verifying your address for your membership packet.

I understand that I am applying for membership for the Loyal White Knights of the KKK. I understand that I have to be an American Citizen and I am 18 years of age or older. I also agree that I have no SEX Offender charges. I am a White Man Or Woman of Christian Faith. A believer in the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America I pledge my allegiance to the Loyal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. I swear on my honor that if accepted I will give 100% loyalty to this Klan and its goal. I agree to learn the original Klan ways and to respect all Klan Brothers and Sisters in the Loyal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

Name: _____ Age: _____ Date: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____
 D.O.B: _____ Email: _____
 Gender: (Male or Female) Marital Status: (Single/ Married/ Divorced) Children (yes / no)
 Have you been in a klan before? (yes / no) If yes which one _____
 Do you believe in Jesus Christ? (yes / no)
 Are you (Employed / Unemployed / Retired / Disabled / Other)
 Are you working in Law Enforcement / Branch of Government (yes / no)
 If Yes Explain: _____
 Do you have internet on computer or cell phone for klan class? (yes / no)
 Do you have a crimal recored? (yes / no) If so when and what was the last charges: _____

Why do you want to become a member of the Loyal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan?

You must send in a copy of your Photo ID in with this application. You must mail this application and fee to us yourself. Amanda Barker **PO Box 275, Leasburg, NC, 27291**

I understand and agree to the terms of this application.
 Signature: _____

Application Fee \$20.00
 Klan Membership Dues \$10.00 Monthly (Starts once you get your packet form us once approved.

Thank you for your application we will be in contact with you soon!
 Imperial Wizard Chris Barker, Imperial Kligrapp Amanda Barker



Modern Ku Klux Klan membership application²

¹ [https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/hate-incidents?keyword=kkk&f\[0\]=field_hate_incident_type%3A2](https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/hate-incidents?keyword=kkk&f[0]=field_hate_incident_type%3A2) last visited: (13.11.16)

² <http://www.keywordsking.com/a2trIGFwcGxpY2F0aW9u/> last visited on: (13.11.16)

b) Present racial problems.

i. African Americans dissatisfied with racial equality.

African Americans have fought for social and political equality in the US since the abolishment of slavery. The civil rights movement has made much progress since their liberation. For example, the election of President Barack Hussein Obama, who was the first ever African American President of the United States. In other words, the most important and powerful job in the country was attained by an African American. Just this example can show how affective the fight for African American equality has been since the days of slavery.

However, despite this great achievement, there are still many examples of the white and black races not being equal. For example: "Black Americans are about 72% equal to whites, according to a new report on racial equality."¹ There is still a large amount that has to be done for these two races to be equal. Here is a second example of inequality in present American society: "In 2010, the U.S. Sentencing Commission reported that African Americans receive 10% longer sentences than whites through the federal system for the same crimes."²

How does this dissatisfaction help the Ku Klux Klan? As a direct consequence of this dissatisfaction, many African Americans are motivated to publicly advocate for their social equality. Therefore, groups and organizations are created to help battle this racial injustice, and this infuriates white supremacists. A recent study showed that the number of black separatist groups has been on the rise because of the "continuing institutional racism and mistreatments of the African Americans."³ As result of this increase in tension, the Klan is also on the rise in an attempt to oppress or counter this African American movement. Therefore, a possibility as to why the K.K.K. is resurging today is the fact that whites, particularly poor and working class whites, are feeling increasingly threatened about these movements, such as the black

¹ "The 2015 State of Black America, put out by the National Urban League, looked at five categories to come up with that number: economics, education, health, social justice and civic engagement. The index sets white as the benchmark, because, according to the report, "the history of race in America has created advantages for whites that persist in many of the outcomes being measured.'" - <http://time.com/3747800/state-of-black-america-report/>, last visited: (27.11.16)

² Quigley, Bill. "Fourteen Examples of Racism in Criminal Justice System." The Huffington Post. Accessed March 1, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bill-quigley/fourteen-examples-of-raci_b_658947.html last visited (16.11.16)

³ <http://fusion.net/story/269778/kkk-groups-in-america/> last visited: (18.11.16)

separatists, the Black Panthers¹ and Black Lives Matter². For example, recently, many of the black social movements were demanding that the Confederate flag be taken down in South Carolina. This request was accepted and resulted in Ku Klux Klan rallies all across the country.³ This development very much resembles the the reaction of the white Southerners feeling oppressed by the black movement in the 1860's, which resulted in the establishment of the K.K.K. It also resembles the oppression felt by the whites in the 1920's due to the influx of immigrants. This resulted, both times, in a spike in Klan membership.

ii. All Lives Matter movement.

As mentioned earlier, the Black Lives matter movement has been the center of attention in the media since it was first created in 2012. In response to the creation of this social movement, which fights for the racial equality of African Americans, a counter movement has developed called All Lives Matter. All lives Matter is a slogan made up to criticize the Black Lives Matter movement.⁴ Black Lives Matter strives to raise awareness and prevent “racial profiling, police brutality and racial inequality in the Justice system”⁵. However, All Lives Matter believe that not only black lives matter, but also those of the whites and other ethnicities.⁶ As the Huffington Post states: ““Black Lives Matter“ is trying to highlight that there is demonstrable evidence that black lives matter less than white lives to the criminal justice system (and the American government as a whole).”⁷ This development suggests that many Americans are still failing to acknowledge, or are ignoring, the evidence that there is great social inequality in American society today.

¹ The Black Panther Party is a “revolutionary black nationalist and socialist organization” that fights for African American equality in the united states. - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Panther_Party last visited: (16.11.16)

² The Black Lives Matter movement is a social movement, “that campaigns against violence and systematic racism toward black people.” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Lives_Matter last visited: (16.11.16)

³ <http://fusion.net/story/269778/kkk-groups-in-america/> last visited: (16.11.16)

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Lives_Matter last visited on: (16.11.16)

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Lives_Matter last visited on: (16.11.16)

⁶ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jesse-damiani/every-time-you-say-all-li_1_b_11004780.html last visited: (16.11.16)

⁷ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jesse-damiani/every-time-you-say-all-li_1_b_11004780.html last visited: (16.11.16)

All Lives Matter is a slogan that is somewhat similar to the Klan ideology, that is racist¹. An increasing amount of people fail to realize that there is evidence behind what the Black Lives Matter campaign is asserting. It is because of this racist mentality on the part of some that the Klan is having so much success. For example, as a Black Lives Matter protest was in preparation in New York, a local Ku Klux Klan leader announced that his members would come to protest the movement.² During this interview, the Klan leader indicated that “Black Lives Matter and Obama are their [the Klan’s] biggest recruiting tool”³. It is their “biggest recruiting tool” because Black Lives Matter and Obama have frightened and intimidated xenophobic and uneducated Americans about the fact that this minority is gaining social equality, thus making them feel insecure⁴ and threatened. “Immediately after Obama was elected, we saw two of the largest hate websites in the country crash.”⁵ Here we have evidence that the election of President Obama made many Americans so worried and insecure to the point of joining a hate group.

The Klan interview continues: “The Black Lives Matter movement has scared many, including white children, who are targeted on Long Island, Monker said. “They're scared. It's bad to be white now on Long Island. They get white guilt shoved down their throats,” Monker said.”⁶ This quote here elaborates my point. The Klan is, again, targeting the fear of the people and telling them that this movement is dangerous for the white race. This is exactly what the Klan did in the 1860’s when the blacks were freed, and as it did in the 1920’s when immigrants were arriving. The Klan has used this technique every time that there is an increase in social problems in order to gain support. Many ignorant people are starting to believe that this Black Lives Matter movement is dangerous, in the same way that ignorant whites believed the Klan’s

¹ Racist because one fails to recognize that there is proof in our political and social system that blacks are being treated unequally. Racist because some are ignorant of the fact that blacks are trying to gain social equality-- by saying “All lives Matter” you are degrading their fight. -http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jesse-damiani/every-time-you-say-all-li_1_b_11004780.html

² <http://patch.com/new-york/westhampton-hamptonbays/kkk-speaks-out-black-lives-matter-plans-attend-westhampton-beach> last visited: (16.11.16)

³ <http://patch.com/new-york/westhampton-hamptonbays/kkk-speaks-out-black-lives-matter-plans-attend-westhampton-beach> last visited: (16.11.16)

⁴ “Insecure” and “threatened” because: “Today, psychologists explain that people who join groups such as the Ku Klux Klan are insecure and feel a need to belong to something that makes them feel powerful or superior.” - Susan Campbell Bartoletti, THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE K.K.K., P.58

⁵ “Crash” meaning so many people were trying to join these hate groups that the server could no longer properly function. Inside the Ku Klux Klan documentary.

⁶ Ibid

propaganda during the last two times in US history when the Klan was at its height. This All Lives Matter point is just one example of many as to how the Klan is gaining support.

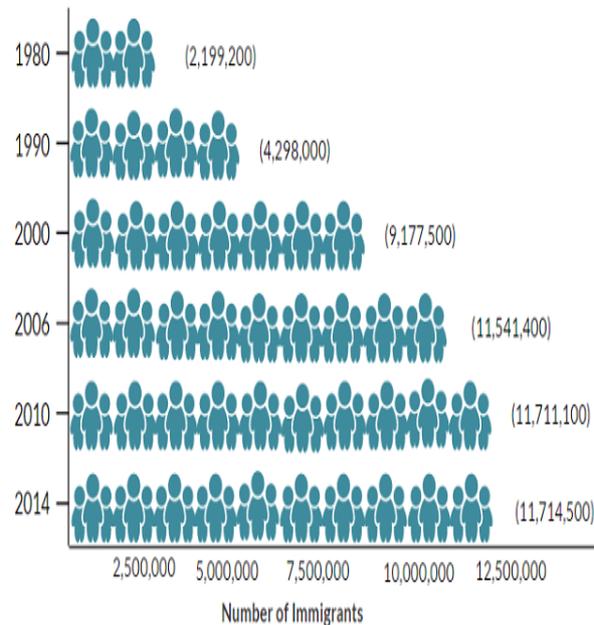
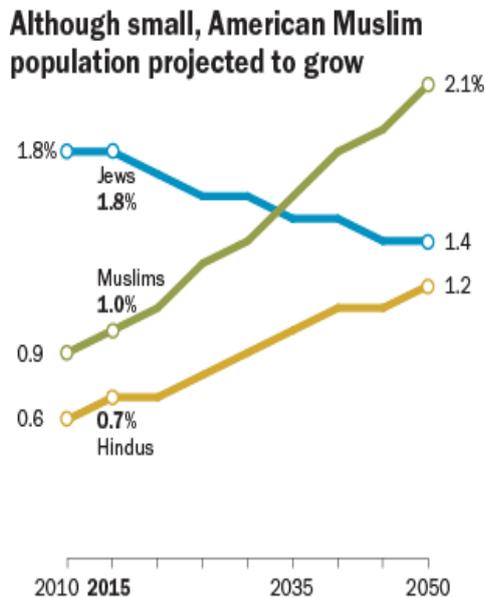
c) Present political problems.

i. Xenophobia of immigrants.

The fear of immigrants was an important factor for the popularity of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920's due to the large amount of arrivals. Today, we are seeing the same problem. Today, in America, we have large waves of immigrants coming in from all over the world¹, but especially Muslim countries and Mexico². These immigrants are causing fear amongst many Americans for three reasons: lack of job security, violence and fear of terrorism. We will now observe how the Klan is using this fear to gain momentum today.

*"Muslim population projected to grow"*³

*Mexican immigrant population in U.S.*⁴



¹ "Since 1970, the number of U.S. immigrants more than quadrupled, rising from 9.6 million in 1970 to 42.4 million in 2014." - <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states> last visited: (27.11.16)

² "In 2014, Mexican immigrants accounted for approximately 28 percent of the 42.4 million foreign born in the United States, making them by far the largest immigrant group in the country." <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states> last visited: (27.11.16)

³ <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/01/06/a-new-estimate-of-the-u-s-muslim-population/> last visited: (27.11.16). We can see that Muslim immigrants are in the middle of increasing.

⁴ <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/mexican-immigrants-united-states> last visited: (27.11.16). We can see that number of Mexican immigrants is at an all-time high in the U.S.

Firstly, America is in the middle of an economic crisis. Many white Americans are being fired or are in fear of losing their job. For example: "Currently, there are 11.5 million fewer job holders than there were in 2007 before the recession began. "That's the true depth of our jobs deficit," O'Keefe says."¹ With this in mind, the concern of the American people is increasing. White Parents are not able to support their families and many whites are living in poverty.² Similarly, to the 1920's, people need someone to blame, and who better to blame than the cheap labor coming in from other countries, like Mexico. People blame their frustration on other minorities and this leads to hate and fear. People who start to become resentful and hateful towards other ethnicities might become violent, and the organization that supports this is the Ku Klux Klan.

Furthermore, Americans have always allegedly been accepting of immigrants, but a common factor throughout the history of American society is that, each time that there is a large influx of immigrants, Klan membership grows. In the 1860's when the slaves were freed, the freedmen were considered immigrants, giving birth to the Klan. In the 1920's when a large flux of European immigrants arrived, the Klan had a resurgence and today, there is an-all time high in Mexican immigration and a substantial increase in Muslim immigration; once again, membership in the Klan is resurging. The waves of immigrants prompt fear in xenophobic Americans who desire to get rid of them, and to return to the America that they once knew, with less immigrants.

Secondly, violence is a large factor in the fear of immigrants. Many ignorant Americans fear that their country is going to be populated with criminals from other countries. The problem with this is that this assumption is stereotypical and racist. Yes, it is true that blacks and Latinos are more likely to commit a crime than whites or Asians per capita³, but

¹ <http://money.usnews.com/money/careers/articles/2011/09/28/15-stunning-statistics-about-the-jobs-market> last visited: (16.11.16)

² Statistic about white poverty in America in 2016: Just in Kentucky alone 17% of the white population lives in poverty. - <http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/poverty-rate-by-raceethnicity/?dataView=0¤tTimeframe=0&selectedDistributions=white&selectedRows=%7B%7D> last visited (27.11.16)

³ Statistic of crime rate by race: According to the BJS non-Hispanic blacks accounted for 39.4% of the prison and jail population in 2009, while non-Hispanic whites were 34.2%, and Hispanics (of any race) 20.6%. The incarceration rate of black males was over six times higher than that of white males. - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_and_crime_in_the_United_States last visited: (16.11.16)

unfortunately this type of statistic leads to an unfair fear of all minorities. As a further example, we have the speech of Donald Trump (before his election) stating, in brief, that Mexico was sending rapists and criminals into the U.S.¹ This kind of false statement causes fear in many Americans and motivates some to take action. In this case, the Klan is using its immigration propaganda to get support from such worried Americans.

Finally, this xenophobia is helping the Ku Klux Klan because of the rare cases of terror attacks by immigrants on U.S. soil. President-elect Trump has repeatedly stated that he wants to impose a ban on Muslims entering America. By saying this, he is telling his supporters and the world, that he, himself, feels threatened by Muslims. If he feels this way, many others will also feel fear of immigrants. Yes, the mass shooting in San Bernardino² California was done by a Muslim couple, but if we start thinking that all Muslims are terrorists, the list of the hated will never end. This type of stereotypical generalization is what President-elect Trump has clearly used in the past, and causes fear in the lives of white Americans, and could result in people joining a hate group that will fight against these stereotypes.

ii. Political divisiveness and the election of Donald Trump

The political divisiveness that is present in today's America is very similar to the political divisiveness present in American society in 1865, when the Ku Klux Klan was first established. Back then, Ku Klux Klan members felt oppressed because their opposing political party was in power. This oppression was the reason that many men were willing to join the Klan. However, today, it is the exact opposite. Despite the fact that after the 1920's, the Klan has never been as popular as it was then, recently, with the election of Obama, the Klan has been slowly gaining support because its members felt they were somewhat being oppressed. Nonetheless, with

¹ Trump's quote about Mexican immigrants: "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people." Information from: <http://www.newsday.com/news/nation/donald-trump-speech-debates-and-campaign-quotes-1.11206532> last visited on (16.11.16)

² In "December 2015, 14 people were killed and 22 were seriously injured in a terrorist attack at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, California, which consisted of a mass shooting and an attempted bombing by a Muslim couple." Information from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2015_San_Bernardino_attack last visited: (16.11.16)

the election of President Trump (who they openly support), the Klan is no longer oppressed but motivated.

Furthermore, an important aspect about the Klan politically is that it always had a powerful and influential leader to help the establish itself and gain momentum. The person to guide the Klan through their modern era and resurgence could be David Duke¹, the former Imperial Wizard of the K.K.K. The reason why this is so notable is the fact that it is similar to the other resurgences of the Klan but also because, our President-elect, Donald Trump refused to disavow the endorsement² of David Duke, which could suggest, a tolerance for his ideology. In short, not only are the old Ku Klux Klan members motivated by this election³, many non-racists are being influenced by our new President-elect, which in some aspects re-enforces the ethics of the Klan. This could well, of course, bring the Klan a large amount of new members.

Furthermore, the President-elect has many times taken actions or omissions that suggest that he can be considered racist. His dismissal of the Black Lives Matter campaign, his allegations about Mexicans and Muslims, and his slow denunciation of Ku Klux Klan leaders, neo-Nazi and white Nationalist groups illustrates my point. Moreover, the fact that the President-elect just recently appointed a white nationalist as White House chief strategist is even more shocking. Stephen Bannon has been accused of “fanning the flames of neo-Nazism and white supremacy”⁴. Also, Bannon as the chief editor of a media platform, regularly encouraged racists opinions. White supremacy was, and is, everything that the Klan has ever fought for. Having someone share their ethics in the White House with an important position,

¹ “[...] a handsome, young, college-educated Klansman, David Duke, was trying to give Klandom a new image via the college campuses and national television. Behind the revival lay a growing blue-collar job anxiety, produced by a troubled economy and what the Klan charged was governmental favoritism toward black people. As the Klansmen saw it, the problem was not one of keeping the blacks down, but rather giving white people and equal chance.” - David M. Chalmers, HOODED AMERICANISM, P.7

² David Duke, who was the former leader of the K.K.K., announced his support for Donald Trump. Trump was then interviewed and asked about this endorsement in February, 2015, during his candidacy. When Trump was asked about this endorsement he refused to disavow the support from the former leader of the K.K.K. He said: “Certainly I would disavow if I thought there was something wrong.” - <http://time.com/4240268/donald-trump-kkk-david-duke/> last visited: (27.11.16)

³ “The Ku Klux Klan announced it will host a victory parade in a North Carolina town in celebration of Donald Trump’s win, bringing white nationalism and the alt-right movement to mainstream politics.” Information from: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/ku-klux-klan-parade-north-carolina-donald-trump-celebration-president-elect-white-supremacists-alt-a7410671.html> last visited: (16.11.16)

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/14/steve-bannon-white-house-racism-fear> last visited: (16.11.16)



The current U.S. President, Donald Trump¹

will likely help the Klan gain even more popularity through large amounts of publicity for the positions the Klan espouses.

d) Why it is happening again.

i. How Racism and government converged, aiding the resurgence of the K.K.K.

Similarly to the prior eras of Klan popularity, a large factor in the resurgence of the Klan today is the timing of the common political and social factors coming together. Through my thesis research and analysis, we notice that at times when America is struggling with a particularly intractable problem (economy, immigration, war), the Klan finds a way to take advantage of the vulnerability of the country and manipulates people into joining its movement.

Another common factor is that when people are convinced that foreigners are dangerous, they become xenophobic, leading to unnecessary tension. The Klan takes advantage of this insecurity and frustration in white Americans and blames it on the minorities. Andrew Johnson, Herbert Hoover and Donald Trump all used this tactic to create more support and momentum for their campaigns. The consequences have been, and are, that the Klan has gained support. Many insecure people tend to defend themselves by resorting to a hate group that is not going to protect them, but which is just going to do illegal and malicious things to make the situation even worse.

Socially, the African Americans are still fighting for their social equality. As they gain equality and power, many white Americans start to feel insecure, resulting in the popularity of

¹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-34903577> last visited: (28.11.16)

hate groups. This U.S. is suffering from many racial problems, and the Klan is gaining popularity because of these tensions. Politically, immigration is at an all-time high. For the white Americans who aren't threatened racially, many are threatened by unemployment and lower salaries attributed to immigration, which also results in the popularity of a hate group like the Klan. With all these factors operating at the same time, the resurgence of the Klan seems inevitable.

Moreover, if we look back at the two last times during which the Klan was popular, we can notice that most all social and political factors then apparent resemble the ones that are present today_ Immigration, racial tension and influential politicians. The fact these problems were repeated in the 1920's, and resulted in the resurgence can only mean that since we now have the same problems again, the Klan will likely again gain momentum. Today's factors are arguably worse because of how far we have come in society; to still have the some of the same political and social problems as we did in the 1860's and 1920's is bewildering.

The Ku Klux Klan is surely in the middle of a new rising. "The number of Klan-affiliated groups in America grew to 190 last year, up from 72 in 2014, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center's report."¹ No one can predict how large this resurgence shall be in comparison to the two former ones. However, one thing is certain: every time the Klan has surfaced throughout history it has been preceded by the same social and political factors, and today these factors are again present in our society.

V. Conclusion

To conclude, the combination of the political and social factors of the 1860's and 1920's undoubtedly gave rise to the Klan. In the 1860's, many things were going on in both spheres, but the fact that each's uncertainty and upheaval happened together and at the same time was the key to the establishment of the first Ku Klux Klan. The xenophobia of the newly freed blacks (immigration), the political oppression and the powerful political leader all converged resulting in the birth of the K.K.K. of the 1860's.

¹ <http://fusion.net/story/269778/kkk-groups-in-america/> last visited: (16.11.16)

As mentioned earlier, in the 1920's, many of the ongoing racial and social factors then present resembled those of the 1860's. There were large waves of immigrants arriving, racism and white superiority were still very present in American society, and the Klan had the endorsement of two former U.S. Presidents.

In today's America, we again have the arrival of immigrants, apparent racial tension and again, influential leaders present to help guide the K.K.K. through their new era of hatred. It is not a coincidence that throughout history, these similar factors have appeared, and then soon after, the Ku Klux Klan also appears. There seems to be a pattern, and we are right now witnessing a repetition of history.

Finally, after having done much research, I have achieved my main objective, which was mentioned in my introduction. To gain a deeper knowledge about and understanding of racism. I now realize and appreciate how much racism is present in the United States today. Unfortunately, due to the recent rise in apparent racial and political tensions, I do believe that the Klan will be popular again. I also strongly believe that history tends to repeat itself and this might be another reason why I took such an interest in this T.M. topic. Personally, the fact that all these factors have intermittently appeared throughout history and have each time led to a spike in Klan memberships leaves with my little doubt that these factors converged, giving rise to the Klan. "History repeats itself, but in such a cunning disguise that we never detect the resemblance until the damage is done."¹ As for today, the fact that these political and racial problems are present at the same time strongly suggests to me that the Klan will terrorize again, much to the detriment of its victims, and the society from which it was reborn.

¹ Syndedy J. Harris, - http://www.azquotes.com/author/6311-Sydney_J_Harris last visited: (27.11.16)

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