

Does the adversarial nature i.e. that two opposing sides participated of the witness...

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Does the adversarial nature i. e. that two opposing sides participated of the witness testimony and reports from the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Conditions of Affairs in the Late Insurrection States make it easier or more difficult for historians to understand what actually happened on the ground during Ku Klux Klan racial and political violence?

Blacks experienced a number of racial and political violence and injustice from Ku Klux Klan. The inactivity of the government towards these injustices and the reports from the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Conditions of Affairs in the Late Insurrection States make it difficult for historians to understand what really happened among blacks as they intentionally blind their eyes from the activity and secretly support the Ku Klux Klan to preserve the Republicans and white supremacy. Failure of some sheriffs to make some arrests, refusal of juries to deliver verdicts, a few number of federal troops stationed in the South to pacify violence, and the lack of confidence among law enforcements were some of the evidences that lead to suppression of information during the Ku Klux Klan time (Brown and Shannon, 272-273).

Many historians considered the report as the richest source of history at that time. However, the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Conditions of Affairs in the Late Insurrection States has made it possible to pass the Ku Klux Klan Act. Under this law, the crime committed by a private person against other citizen becomes legal as long as its purpose is to preserve and protect the states. With this legal conditions, the Ku Klux Klan has gained more power to suppress the blacks and inflict violence, especially when it comes to their rights to suffrage as there will be a law that could exempt

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them from possible persecution. The lives of black citizens were put into danger as the Joint Select Committee report even endorsed the Ku Klux Klan together with federal troops, courts, and suspension of the writ of habeas corpus. Thus, this showed that even the most accurate facts can be corrupted when political biases are involved.

As you would notice, majority of the witnesses during the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Conditions of Affairs in the Late Insurrection States were Republicans. Some also narrate their stories on hearsays which was accepted by the court. In general, all of the witnesses did not recognize any member of the Ku Klux Klan because they were in disguise. There was a belief that Republicans paid these witnesses to come up with the script about Ku Klux Klan. Therefore, if historian will based their reports on the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Conditions of Affairs in the Late Insurrection States simply because they are the only source of history at that time, it would be difficult for us and historians to assess what actually happened on the ground during Ku Klux Klan racial and political violence because of political intentions, hearsays instead of facts, and man-made scripts of history.

Work Cited

Brown, Victoria Bissell and Shannon, Timothy J. Using the Source: Congressional Hearings and Reports on the Ku Klux Klan. n. d. Online Book.

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