

The ku klux klan



Ku Klux Klan

The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) was established after the American Civil War when black people were given rights. The KKK is a group of white secret societies who oppose the advancement of blacks, Jews and other minority groups. The Klan is more or less present in the United States or Canada and they often use violence to get their points across. They wear robes and hoods and burn crosses to intimidate those who are non-members. Four major periods for the Ku Klux Klan are the mid – 1860's – to early 1870's, 1915 to 1944, late 1940's to early 1970's and the mid 1970's.

The Klan was formed by some confederate army veterans as a “ social club” in Pulaski, Tennessee in 1865/1866. The first leader of this Klan was Nathan B. Forest who was a former confederate general. He was called the Grand Wizard. The name Ku Klux Klan is derived from the Greek word” kluklos” and the English word “ clan”, Kluklos meaning circle. The Klan members believed that whites were superior to blacks and coerced blacks and to stop them from voting or to exert the other rights they had merited during Reconstruction which was the period following the end of the American Civil War in 1865. They often attacked and killed a number of blacks and any person who expressed compassion or sympathy for them. They kept their identities secret by wearing disguises and often covered their horses and only rode at night. They spread very rapidly through the south and then became known as the “ Invisible Empire”. The attacks drove blacks out of the southern political life. Soon after the congress passed a law called a force bill which let the president use federal troops towards the Klan. After this the Klan disappeared.

A second Klan was then organized in 1915 by William J. Simmons who was a Methodist Clergyman. This was established for American born white Protestants. This group was aimed at people they considered “ un-Americans” which included blacks, Jews, immigrants and Roman Catholics. They grew fast and by mid 1920’s had over 2 million members. Some of the members used violent means by burning crosses or attacking people who offended them but most relied on peaceful ways. The Klan worked tactfully and by electing public officials they became a powerful political force throughout. Nonetheless censure against the Klan’s violence and disagreements in the group caused the Klan to weaken and soon Klan members were strong in the South only. The Klan then again died out in 1944. Samuel Green, an Atlanta physician then revived the Klan in 1946 but soon died in 1949 and the Klan split into different competing groups. They all opposed racial interrogation.

Increased civil rights activities in the 1960 brought a new wave of Klan violence. Klan members were involved in a numerous amount of terrorist attacks; this involved the killing of the three civil rights workers in Mississippi, and the bombing of Birmingham, Alabama, church in which four black girls were killed. President Lyndon B. Johnson used the Federal Bureau of investigations to infiltrate the Klan. Some members were sent to prison, and membership fell to around about 5, 000 by the early 1970’s.

Recent Developments: Starting in the mid 1970’s new leaders tried present a more respectable image to competing Klan groups. Some also accepted woman as members and set up youth groups. The KKK particularly appealed to whites who resented both special programmes designed to help blacks

and recent immigrants. The Klan abandoned its oppositions to Roman Catholics. Klan members then rose to about 10, 000 by 1980. The KKK still attracted people with extreme views who use violence. In 1979 Klan members and their supporters killed five anti-Klan demonstrators in Greensboro, North Carolina. Members killed a black youth in Mobile, Alabama, in 1981. Since then, Klan membership has deteriorated due to prosecutions for illegal activities and financial repercussions for KKK violation of civil rights. Membership is now under 5, 000. Most Klan members now live in the South or Mid West.