

NEW YORK'S ANTI-KLAN OUTBURST

LEAVE THE KU KLUX KLAN "to us Protestants," said James W. Gerard, former Ambassador to Germany, recently in an address before a New York Jewish congregation; "no Jewish organization need take any action. We Americans," he went on, "should not suffer any such organization as the Ku Klux Klan to exist." Meanwhile the Klan has set New York by the ears; Mayor Hylan has ordered the police to investigate the activities of an accredited representative of the Invisible Empire, and, save in one instance reported in the press, the order has been denounced in Protestant, Catholic and Jewish circles alike. Judge Francis X. Mancuso has gone a step further by instructing a Grand Jury to scrutinize the activities of the secret organization as a potential breeder of racial hatred and religious strife, and Ferdinand Pecora, Acting District Attorney of New York County, is said to have come into possession of about eight hundred names of reputed members of the Klan and to have secured other information, which may result in legal proceedings being brought against the hooded hosts. Among the interesting pamphlets which came into the possession of the District Attorney were announcements of ambitious phrasing. The Klan is described in these documents as "the most dauntless organization known to man," and as having "the most sublime lineage in history." Mr. Pecora is reported to have remarked that "compared with these fellows, the Crusaders were a bunch of pikers."

Exciting much comment was the accusation that Calvary Baptist Church, the largest of its denomination in New York, was a hotbed of Klan propaganda; but the charge was vigorously denied in a statement signed by leading members and by Dr. John Roach Straton, pastor, who, before a congregation that is said to have overflowed into the streets, virtually read Dr. Oscar D. Haywood, self-announced apostle of the Klan, out of office as evangelist of Calvary Church, and denounced the Klan's methods, tho admitting that its motives might be sincere and good. Other developments in Klan activities near New York to inspire comment include a new secret society, "The Royal Riders of the Red Robe," seemingly affiliated with the larger organization, which is reported to have backed the demand of the Leif Ericson Klan of Paterson, New Jersey, that German should not be taught in the high schools of that city, and the permitted address of a hooded evangelist in a Reformed Church in West Sayville, Long Island. While the Klan is thus reported to be busying itself in and about New York, its strategy is to be seriously challenged. The American Unity League of Chicago, an anti-Klan organization which has been making public the names of Klansmen in Chicago, is reported to be preparing to launch a similar campaign in New York. The hoods and sheets, it is said, are to be lifted. Another rebuke comes from Arthur S. Tompkins, of Nyack, New York, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Masons of the State of New York, who denies an allegation that 75 per cent. of the Klan members throughout the country are Masons. As quoted in press reports, his statement runs:

"The Masons are utterly opposed to the Ku Klux Klan as un-American and un-Masonic. We know of only a few Masons who are members of the Klan, and we don't consider them good Masons. The Grand Lodge of the State of New York, its officers and the great body of Masons throughout New York State are absolutely opposed to the Klan and its activities."

Objecting strongly to the "color scheme of to-day," Dr. Straton said in his sermon against secret societies: "White Ku Klux Klanism, green sectarianism (a reference to Irish Catholic societies), yellow journalism and general blackguardism are equally distasteful to my eye and heart." Grasping the fringe of a flag draped near the pulpit, he called all Catholics, Protestants and Jews to rally around its red, white and blue as being a

The Literary Digest for December 23, 1922

good enough color scheme for all Americans, and the congregation, according to reports, arose, applauding and joining in singing "America." As for his opinion on the Klan itself, Dr. Straton is quoted in press reports as declaring:

"The ideals of the Ku Klux Klan, as stated in their literature and by their lecturers, beyond any question are fair and good enough, but they fail to see that their ways are necessarily contrary to our American principles. I believe, therefore, to put it concisely, that their motives are good and their methods are bad; their principles are virtuous, but their practises are vicious. I think recent history in this country will support me in this contention.

"Here we have already not only a 'labor group' and a 'capitalistic group,' but also the Catholic group, with its secret societies, and the Jewish group, with its secret societies, and the negro group, with its secret societies, and now comes the Ku Klux Klan, with many imitators and auxiliaries springing up around it. We have recently been treated to an account of the startling doings of the 'Royal Riders of the Red Robe,' and even the women, we are told, are organizing, tho they seem to be troubled somewhat for an appropriate name, since the men have already usurped all the robes, both red and white, and for both day and night."

Catholic comment hails the Klan as another organized breeder of bigotry. The "organized fanaticism, bigoted nationalism, subsidized prejudice, and hate-dispensing propaganda as represented by the Ku Klux Klan in America has gone just far enough without drawing the attention of the officials of the country," declares *The Tablet*, official organ of the Catholic diocese of Brooklyn, in a bitterly resentful denunciation. Instead of a Government by the people in Lincoln's happy phrase, the Klan, we are told, seeks "to subvert the Government of Lincoln and Washington and to give us a Government 'of the Klan, by the Klan, and for the Klan.' And it has the blasphemous gall to assert that such a Government would be Christian and American. A more dastardly plot, a more repulsive conspiracy, has not been born this side of hell in our day." *The Tablet* further relieves its pent-up feelings against the Klan and "constant misrepresentation and calumny indulged in by anti-Catholic papers, tracts, lecturers and organizations" by exclaiming:

"We are sick and disgusted of being charged that we are 'in politics' when there are less than six Senators Catholics out of nearly a hundred, and less than forty out of over four hundred Congressmen, and not one in the President's Cabinet; no denomination has less men in national politics than we, and those who manufacture this calumny are guilty of drawing a red herring across their own trail. We are sick and disgusted of hearing the Knights of Columbus lied about and slandered, by a motley crew who know their charges are false. We are sick and disgusted of hearing that we are plotting to destroy the public schools, or opposed to public education, a charge concocted by knaves and meant to be swallowed by ignoramuses. We are sick and disgusted of all of this, and smiliar charges, made either through hatred or ignorance, and frequently for personal profit."

Opposition to the Ku Klux Klan, on the ground that it is un-American as well as anti-Semitic, is also exprest in a resolution adopted by 700 representatives of 250 organizations at a conference in New York of the American Jewish Congress. The resolution expresses the delegates' "abhorrence" of the policies and acts of the secret order, and says: "The conference believes the Ku Klux Klan to be a menace to the unity and integrity of American life, and declares its purpose to cooperate with all groups prepared to oppose the Ku Klux Klan as hostile to American ideals and subversive of the spirit of American democracy."

But this is the very reverse of the true spirit of the Klan, declares Dr. Haywood, who, as he is quoted in press interviews, recalls that the Congressional investigation of the Klan "failed to find anything to condemn it as opposed to the Constitution of the United States or the Federal statutes." He goes

The Literary Digest for December 23, 1922

on to assert that the organization is a "secret, fraternal order devoted to the cultivation of race pride, racial purity, religious liberty, patriotism and social ideals of Protestant Christianity, its ultimate objective being to establish and maintain the solidarity and supremacy, of the Gentile white Protestant American in America." Those who do not come under this classification are not excluded because of hatred of them, Dr. Haywood asserts, but "because of the desire to bring together those elements that will be congenial respecting the development of American ideals." The Klan "is, therefore, not anti-Catholic; it is not anti-Jewish; it is not anti-negro; it is not anti-alien."

Defense of the Klan comes also from a pulpit. Canon William Sheafe Chase, rector of Christ Protestant Episcopal Church, Brooklyn, says that while he may not approve of all the methods of the Klan, he is "glad to find a strong band of men who are organized to resist the corruption of politics and the lawlessness of our times." As press reports quote him further, he avers: "A society, like a man, may be loved for the enemies it has. The bootleggers, the professional gamblers, the producers of vile songs and plays, the Sabbath breakers and corrupt leaders are attacking it and using every effort to destroy it. Personally, I think that the violent enemies of the Klan are more of a menace to the public welfare than the Klan itself."

