

# The Klan Rides Again

## *A Stenographic Report of the Klan Meeting at Atlanta*

FROM their "Klavern" (meeting hall) which is on Beecher Street at the corner of Cascade Road, they formed a double line and marched silently, two by two to a nearby empty lot, which was surrounded by woods. The Klansmen were all dressed in white robes and white hoods and faces were completely masked. *Two police officers stood at the corner during the entire meeting.*

In the center of the field a loud speaker was set up and through this the chairman called the numbers 112-34. The Klansmen formed a large circle. There were about 150. The leader was dressed in red satin, also fully masked with a red hood over his head. Addressing them he started: "Klansmen, Klanswomen (there were no women) and friends. On this the 20th anniversary of the Ku Klux Klan I have the honor, the great privilege and the pleasure to introduce Mr. H. C. Berkman, Klan giant from Kentucky." (It was later announced that the speaker was A. C. Moore from Columbus.)

Mr. Moore: "I appreciate that greatly, because we believe that never in our history is needed such an organization as the Ku Klux Klan as it is needed today. . . .

"My friends, the threat of war has again started in Europe. And we must build a strong defense on the land and sea with army and navy.

"And, my friends, we are facing a great problem: Communism. Communism has always been with us since way back in the days of Plato. It is not new. But when Russia took over the country and hoisted the red flag of the Communists, then the world began to understand that something new had been done.

"Communism stands for the destruction of property; the destruction of home; the destruction of womanhood; the destruction of government. (You say 'We need not worry about what happened in Russia.' But now, at this moment, a rebellion is going on in China, in South America.) They want to bring the whole world under the dome of Moscow. They said: 'We want to rule the whole world' and so they sent 68,000 foreigners, agitators, dirty Communists to the United States of America, paid with Moscow's shiny gold.

"God saved America for the world. When Europe was sorely pressed God gave them another continent which is the United States of America. (At this point there are yells from the Klansmen.)

"On Thanksgiving Day, 1915, the organization was reborn and kneeling at the fiery cross on top of Stone Mountain, we pledged to fight for the restriction of foreign immigration. (More yells.) That people are

listening to these soap-box speakers, these Russian foreigners, who want to destroy good government, put up a red flag in place of Old Glory and let Washington take its orders from Moscow.

"You men who get up early every morning to work hard to earn a little home. The Communists want to take it away from you and give it to the bums that ride the freight cars and never do a lick of work. They say that it doesn't belong to you and is the property of the state. Your wife, who has lived with you for ten years or twenty-five years, they would say doesn't belong to you and is the property of the state and any man who wants her could have her. They say your children do not belong to you. They would take them away and educate them to Communism and turn them against you—their own fathers and mothers. Do you like that?

"In Russia there is no unemployment. Yes, there is no unemployment. They list you as a working man and put you to work and make you do what they want you to and if you don't like it they put you up against the wall and shoot you down. Do you like that?

"And another thing: The Communists preach absolute equality of race. He goes to where you are working and puts his arm upon your shoulder and with that arm still warm he goes and puts that same arm around the niggers. He goes to the nigger section and says to them: 'Don't you know you can sit in front seats on street cars and have a white wife?

"And they are making an impression. **NIGGERS ARE PICKETING A WHITE STORE!** They are trying to force a white store to hire nigger help. If any man of you would go into a store and buy merchandise from a nigger clerk, then God have mercy upon your dirty soul!

"Do you believe a nigger that cleans your streets and cooks your food and shines your shoes is as good as you are? If you do, then join the Communist Party. And I warn you that the Klan is riding again.

"We believe in free speech, but not for Communists. We have another system in Columbus. We find out where they are and wipe them out. We find their meeting places and wipe it from the face of the earth. There are Communists in Atlanta. Our job is to seek them out.

"There is a Communist at this meeting. And I dare you to come out and start something. (Crowd yells.) I'm not afraid of you. My name is A. C. Moore from Columbus and I'm not afraid to show my face and I dare you to come up and show your face. I'd show you that no dirty Red is going to

take my country away. (More yells from crowd.) Under my robe beats a 100-percent white heart. I know that there are dirty sneaking Reds at this meeting, but I'm not afraid of you. I dare you to start something. We'd show you a thing or two. (More yells.) I warn you that the Klansmen are riding again. And better that you slit your throat from ear to ear or tie a rope around it and weigh it down and jump to the bottom of the ocean than to let the Klansmen catch you. (More yells.)

"Our job now is to find out how many are buying from nigger clerks. Did you see where one of Rogers' stores here had their white clerks take their picture with nigger clerks and published it in a nigger paper? (Atlanta World.) No real white man would take his picture with a nigger. I would no more do that than I would climb Stone Mountain to kiss the — of a mosquito. And no real Protestant would buy from a man who would take his picture with a nigger. Any man who would do that—well, all I can say is that may God have mercy on his rotten, filthy soul!

"We got to keep the nigger in his place. We'll show them that the Klan is riding again. . . ."



KU KLUX KLAN



# The Croppers Prepare

## Report of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Congress

**"H**ERE'S a man from Hell's Acre," said Walter Moskop, an Arkansas cropper who himself has reason to know. A "poor white" of the cotton belt and with the union from its inception, he was introducing a fellow-fighter, a Negro cropper, to his brother delegates of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union convention which was held in Little Rock's Labor Temple this past week.

"Brother Ware," Moskop continued, "comes from Birdson, Arkansas. Here's a man who lives there and who's stuck through all the fighting and bullets."

A little man with iron-gray hair, brown skin and a patient gentleness, stood by Moskop. "Brothers," he said, "I'm not able to explain exactly what my heart desires to say to you about our union." He paused, obviously seeking his words. "I figure it'd be nothing to sacrifice my life to break down the justice we got. But us here are in unity. . . . My wife lies home sick. I asked myself, could I leave her? I'd be a poor man if I profess and set home and do nothing. So I come—

"My wife, (she's the only one I can talk to,) she says, 'Amos, you go out in the

fields, a-talking, you risk your life.' I say, 'What is this, if I sit at home, but death? If I go, I adventure and may win life and freedom.'" His voice rang deeper. "America, they say, is our country. But it has been taken away from us, reversed in our hands. We must learn the right way to deliver ourselves."

Otis Sweeden, whom chairman Moskop next introduced, came from the plains of Oklahoma. Son of a Cherokee Indian and Scotch-Irish mother, he described in rapid-fire American lingo how the Cherokee Indians, the Mexicans, Negroes and whites had grown tired of picking spinach, beets and onions for a quarter a day, then having to pay Griffin Manufacturing Company, which owned the plantation, a dime for transportation out of that.

"At first they were leery," he told the convention. "Over in Oklahoma, plenty of unions've been a racket. But we proved our union different. All races together. We won free transportation and a raise on spinach from 3 to 10 cents a bushel basket and in ten months we got seventy-five locals with 9,500 members in our Farmers' and Farm-Laborers' Union. Then we heard about the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union; we decided to line up with you. We had some Christmas. No relief checks at Muskogees for six weeks, not even potatoes in the house, let alone any candy or toys for the kids. Nice day, Christmas. So my wife and me made some stew for the boys and afterwards, six hundred of us went down to the relief. The officer promised us if we'd go home, we'd get our checks the next day. But we ain't got them yet." (Relief work in Oklahoma is paid twenty-nine dollars a month.)

"You've been doing swell work over here in Arkansas," the Oklahoman continued, "but we're only to first base."

"That's right!" delegates echoed.

"Each man's gotta be an organizer unto himself," this son of a Cherokee went on, "Lean on nobody but yourself. They make us live no better than peons. Conditions are nowhere so bad as for the poor people of the South and Southwest. But we can change things. George Washington secured freedom of this country with a ragged army who left bloodprints in the snow as they marched. We're in the same position today."

**E. B. McKINNEY**, whom Walter Moskop brought before the convention as "one of our great, a pillar of granite in a land of wilderness," was a rural Negro minister who had been preaching organization to his people for thirty-five years. Elected vice-president of the union and one of its leading organ-

izers, he called down the planters' wrath on himself and family. One night his home in Marked Tree, Arkansas, was punctured by more than fifty bullets, his young sons wounded and two men badly shot. Fortunately McKinney was away or he would have been lynched.

"Sometimes people say that race relations are complicated," he addressed the delegates, "but that ain't so. If you are mad at me and I'm not mad at you that's not complicated."

"No, that's right," his hearers agreed.

"The Negro holds no complaint against the white croppers," he continued. "He just asks that you come along, organize and share the same risks."

**O**SCAR F. BLEDSOE, a large plantation owner and President of the Staple Cotton Growers' Association, with a membership of 6,700 Southern landowners who control more than half-a-million acres under cotton production, has explained: "The plantation system is a system of paternal guardianship which has existed for generations, and is predicated on the existence of a race which requires management and in turn presents a responsibility." This is the pre-Civil War language of the South's former slave-holding aristocracy. "We have cared for our Negroes and mules even when our banks failed and our lands were mortgaged. In the North, in time of stress, factories are shut down and men laid off to shift for themselves."

"We would just laugh at the idea of a union," continued the Cotton Growers' President. "We would not deal with it."

But economic facts can also speak. In recent months, Mr. Bledsoe's associates have experienced the bitter taste of swallowing their own words. Many have been forced to deal with the despised Southern Tenant Farmers' Union.

But there are honest, straight-seeing men in the state of Arkansas. Strange as it may appear, two of them sit in an office at the state capitol. E. I. McKinley, Arkansas Commissioner of Labor, and H. C. Malcom, Deputy Commissioner, are union men of long standing. They have withstood pressure to "fall in line," but it is doubtful how much longer the plantation interests will allow them to remain at their posts.

In a devastating report of an investigation of some three hundred claims of Arkansas share-croppers against landlords (a report incidentally filed in Washington at Secretary Wallace's request, but which has brought no action from Washington to aid the cropper), H. C. Malcom records case



Eitaro Ishigaki.