

1925

The Klansman's Manual

In 1925, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan published the *Klansman's Manual*. It describes the four hierarchical "orders" of knighthood, and sets forth the chain of command. Also described are the purposes of the order, saving for the end of the list the goal of "white supremacy." (The material that appears in quotation marks was taken by the editors of the manual from the Klan's constitution.)

The Order***The Name***

"Knights of the Ku Klux Klan."

"Forever hereafter it shall be known as
KNIGHTS OF THE KU KLUX KLAN."

Its Divisions

"There shall be four Kloranic Orders of this Order, namely:

1. "The order of citizenship or K-UNO (Probationary)."
2. "Knight Kamellia or K-DUO (Primary Order of Knighthood)."
3. "Knights of the great Forrest or K-TRIO (The Order of American Chivalry)."
4. "Knights of the Midnight Mystery or K-Quad (Superior Order of Knighthood and Spiritual Philosophies)."

Its Government

The Constitution provides for and establishes that form of government that will best further the interests of the movement and develop to the highest possible efficiency all of its component elements.

1. This form of government is military in character. It will suffice to compare the Klan's form of government to the government of an army. As the United States Army is duly organized with its various officers and troops, so is the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan welded together as an organized force for the fulfillment of its patriotic mission. The Commander-in-Chief is the Imperial Wizard. The Divisional

Commanders are the Grand Dragons. The Brigade Commanders are the Great Titans. The Regimental Commanders are the Exalted Cyclops. All of these Commanders have their respective staffs and other subordinate officers and aides.

2. This form of government is necessary. (a) For efficient administration: (b) For effectiveness in method and operation: (c) For the preservation of the order.

Fraternal order history records the failure of many patriotic societies that were organized on a so-called democratic basis. Without this feature of the military form of government which is designed to provide efficient leadership, effective discipline, intelligent cooperation, active functioning, uniform methods, and unified operation, quickly responsive to the call to put over the immediate task at hand, even the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan would degenerate into a mere passive, inefficient, social order. The military form of government must and will be preserved for the sake of true, patriotic Americanism, because it is the only form of government that gives any guarantee of success. We must avoid the fate of the other organizations that have split on the rock of democracy.

Objects and Purposes (Article II, The Constitution) Mobilization

This is its primary purpose: "To unite white male persons, native-born, Gentile citizens of the United States of America, who owe no allegiance of any nature or degree to any foreign government, nation, institution, sect,

ruler, person, or people; whose morals are good; whose reputations and vocations are respectable; whose habits are exemplary; who are of sound minds and eighteen years or more of age, under a common oath into a brotherhood of strict regulations."

Cultural

The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan is a movement devoting itself to the needed task of developing a genuine spirit of American patriotism. Klansmen are to be examples of pure patriotism. They are to organize the patriotic sentiment of native-born white, Protestant Americans for the defense of distinctively American institutions. Klansmen are dedicated to the principle that America shall be made American through the promulgation of American doctrines, the dissemination of American ideals, the creation of wholesome American sentiment, the preservation of American institutions.

Fraternal

The movement is designed to create a real brotherhood among men who are akin in race, belief, spirit, character, interest, and purpose. The teachings of the order indicate very clearly the attitude and conduct that make for real expression of brotherhood, or, "the practice of Klannishness."

Beneficent

"To relieve the injured and the oppressed; to succor the suffering and unfortunate, especially widows and orphans." The supreme pattern for all true Klansmen is their Criterion of Character, Jesus Christ, "who went about doing good." The movement accepts the full Christian program of unselfish helpfulness, and will seek to carry it on in the manner commanded by the one Master of Men, Christ Jesus.

Protective

1. *The Home.* "To shield the sanctity of the home." The American home is fundamental to all that is best in life, in society, in church, and in the nation. It is the most sacred of human institutions. Its sanctity is to be preserved, its interests are to be safeguarded, and its well-being is to be promoted. Every influence that seeks to disrupt the home must itself be destroyed. The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan would protect the home by promoting whatever would make for its stability, its betterment, its safety, and its inviolability.

2. *Womanhood.* The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan declare that it is committed to "the sacred duty of protecting womanhood"; and announces that one of its purposes is "to shield...the chastity of womanhood." The degradation of women is a violation of the sacredness of human personality, a sin against the race, a crime against society, menace to our country, and a prostitution of all that is best, and noblest, and highest in life. No race, or society, or country, can rise higher than its womanhood.

3. *The Helpless.* "To protect the weak, the innocent, and the defenseless from the indignities, wrongs, and outrages of the lawless, the violent, and the brutal." Children, the disabled, and other helpless ones are to know the protective, sheltering arms of the Klan.

4. *American Interests.* "To protect and defend the Constitution of the United States of America, and all laws passed in conformity thereof, and to protect the states and the people thereof from all invasion of the right from any source whatsoever."

Racial

"To maintain forever white supremacy." "To maintain forever the God-given supremacy

of the white race."

that he will "faithfully strive for the eternal maintenance of white supremacy."

Every Klansman has unqualifiedly affirmed

QUESTIONS

1. What do you think was the purpose of the elaborate scheme of orders and ranks?
2. What is the attitude of the manual toward "democracy"?
3. What do you think the manual means when it discusses the importance of "shielding the chastity of womanhood"?