

KLAN VICTORIES AND DEFEATS

FOR THE FIRST TIME in the country's history, observes the Democratic Louisville *Courier-Journal*, the Ku Klux Klan, "a secret organization known to be alien to the American spirit and hostile to American institutions, emerges from the battle of ballots with its flag of lawlessness advanced." Or, as the Democratic Richmond *Times-Dispatch* remarks in lighter vein, the apparent victory of the hooded organization in several States: "Pillow-slips and night-gowns have been exalted; the sign of the fiery cross is just below the great seal of the United States. All of which is to say that the Klan did itself proud in the recent election."

Of Governors who are said to owe their election to the Klan may be cited three Republican nominees: Ed Jackson of Indiana, Ben S. Paulen of Kansas, and Clarence C. Morley of Colorado. In Colorado, too, we are told, two Republican United States Senators were elected by the votes of Klansmen. One of them, Rice W. Means, is said to be an avowed member of the Klan, and "it would not be surprizing," says David Lawrence, of the Consolidated Press Association, in a Denver dispatch, "if a controversy should arise as to his fitness to hold office." Senator Stanley, Democrat of Kentucky, is said by the Washington correspondent of the *New York World* to have been beaten by the Anti-Saloon League and the Klan, altho other correspondents intimate that a bond issue had something to do with his defeat, and Senator Walsh, Democrat, of Massachusetts, we are assured, "stood a chance to win until the Klan threw its vote against him." W. B. Pine, United States Senator-elect from Oklahoma, is classed by some correspondents as a successful Klan candidate, but representative Democratic and Republican political leaders in Oklahoma deny that his election is a victory for the Ku Klux Klan.

"The Klan itself does not have to boast of the results obtained in the recent election; it's a matter of record," telegraphs a Klan paper, *The Illinois Courier*, of Chicago, in response to a request for Klan comment. And it goes on:

"While the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan as an organization take no part in partizan politics, the tenets of the order are such that it is almost inevitable for its individual members to agree in supporting candidates for public office.

"The Chicago *Daily News*, the Chicago *Tribune*, and other papers in this city and State have criticized the President for declining to denounce the Klan. They have also scolded General Dawes for his silence on the Klan question after his early and ill-advised speech in Maine.

"These papers, and other enemies of the Klan, charged that Gov. Len J. Small was favorable to the Klan and had its support. Norman L. Jones, a Democrat, and the political protégé of Boss George E. Brennan, is a Protestant, but upon the advice of Brennan launched a disastrous attack upon the Klan shortly before the election. Needless to say, he was badly beaten by Governor Small.

"The tremendous vote given President Coolidge in Illinois, as against Davis and LaFollette, both of whom fought the Klan, is most significant, when it is supported by the victories of State and county candidates, whom their opponents sought to injure by charging Klan affiliations."

Taking the country as a whole, thinks another Klan paper, *The Oklahoma Fiery Cross*, of Oklahoma City:

"The outcome ought to teach the Democratic party a thing or two. First, since the organization of the Ku Klux Klan it pays a candidate to listen to the English language while he is making his campaign for votes. Second, so long as Tammany Hall and Brennan and the Irish Catholics of the North and East run the party and put the speeches in the mouths of candidates, that long will the public hold it against the party. Third, the Democratic party must henceforth either be truly progressive and nominate real progressive candidates on a platform which the average voter can easily distinguish from Republican conservatism or go out of business. Democracy can't blow hot and cold. It can't denounce Protestantism and the principles for which Protestantism stands, and at the same time get Protestant votes.

The Literary Digest for November 22, 1924

So long as the Democratic party tries to carry water on both shoulders, cater to both Catholics and Protestants, attract the common people, and at the same time inspire the confidence of the financial interests, it is always going to play second fiddle to the G. O. P. first violin."

But the matter is not settled so easily. At least, not before some pointed questions from Democratic and other papers are answered. "Did the Klan elect Governors in three States and Senators in two?" asks the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot* (Dem.), "or did it merely throw its influence on the side of candidates who would have won anyway?"

Of all the candidates in the United States, thinks the Democratic *Providence News*, "the Klan would probably have preferred the defeat of Governor Smith, Democrat, of New York. Yet he won with a large majority." The hooded order also had marked for defeat Senator Walsh, Democrat, of Montana. Yet he won. On the whole, asserts the Democratic *New York World*, a consistent enemy of the order, "the Klan's record is an unimpressive one for an organization which had boasted its political authority." In Indiana, declares the independent *Indianapolis Times*:

"Ed Jackson, Klan candidate for Governor, has been elected. On the face of returns he ran 100,000 or more behind President Coolidge in the State. This can indicate only one thing—that the Klan label was a liability rather than an asset. There is no reason to believe that if Jackson had sought the office without the Klan label attached to him he would have run behind Coolidge."

In Indiana and other States where Klan triumphs occurred, agree the *Norfolk* paper and the independent *Columbus Ohio State Journal*, Klan candidates "hopped on the band wagon" and "rode in on the tail of the Coolidge landslide." As ex-Governor Henry J. Allen's paper, the *Wichita Beacon* (Ind. Rep.), reminds us:

"It was given out quietly in the last days of the campaign that the Klan had endorsed President Coolidge. This was obviously a band-wagon move, as the leaders knew that Coolidge was sure to be elected anyhow, and they wanted to get some of the glory.

"Senator Capper, Republican of Kansas, was endorsed also as a band-wagon proposition, as his opponent was scarcely known. His record for being unbeatable made him the natural heir to the Klan support."

The real test of the Klan, many editors think, came in Kansas, where, according to the *Columbus* paper, William Allen White "came out third, yet won a moral victory over the Klan by making it ridiculous throughout Kansas and the nation." And Mr. White, in his paper, the *Republican Emporia Gazette*, goes on to explain how Kansas "swatted the Klan":

"The candidates running in Kansas with the endorsement of the Ku Klux Klan on the State ticket, excepting Capper, who beat Coolidge, got minority votes. Paulen is a minority Governor. The Klan made a fight on Ryan for Secretary of State, a Catholic, and Griffith, Attorney-General—two members of the Charter Board that will oust the Klan—and these two men got a majority of the votes cast in the election. The Klan also bitterly opposed Jess Miley, Superintendent of Schools, because he kept a Catholic in his office. He was elected by a majority vote.

The independent *Syracuse Herald*, which informs us that the people of Washington and Michigan defeated "Klan-sponsored proposals to deny parents the right to send their children to parochial schools," is reminded of a modern fable by the recent "victories" of the Klan:

"The fly on the locomotive wheel claimed credit for its revolutions. The Klan's share in Tuesday's cataclysm is suggestive of that modern fable. If it had been a close election, with the same record of supposititious Klan victories, then, indeed, the members of the hooded order might feel a bit 'chesty.' As it was, they had nothing appreciable to do with the flood."