

Flint Enemies of UAW Organize for Battle

Many Members of Ku Klux Klan and Black Legion Join Association Aimed at Damming Lewis' Power Spread

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FLINT, Mich., May 1.—Existence of a rejuvenated Ku Klux Klan, an awakened Black Legion and a new "independent" labor union as candidates for attention in the Flint labor situation was admitted this week by leaders of the three organizations, all of whom hope to marshal the hitherto undirected opposition to John L. Lewis and present a barricade to the further advancement here of Lewis' rapidly-growing United Auto Workers.

That the new union, which calls itself the Independent Automobile Employes' Association, is separate from the awakened night-rider organizations were stressed by the Rev. Paul Coleman, pastor of the First Church of the Nazarene in Flint, who recently climaxed a long campaign from the pulpit against what he terms "un-Americanism" in the UAW by accepting "temporarily" the leadership in the new association.

The Klan and Legion, however, are apparently working in this new campaign as a single unit known as the Protestant Action Association, with headquarters at 733 South Saginaw street and a spokesman in the person of L. W. Thomas, an architect who is the association secretary. Thomas said today that his association includes representatives not only of the Klan and Legion, but of a half dozen fraternal organizations.

OUTLINES PURPOSES

A Klan spokesman who specified that he must remain unnamed described the set-up and purposes of the rejuvenated Klan.

"We are conducting an educational campaign," he said, "and have a listed membership of approximately 7,000. Our members are men who have the interest of the community, state and nation at heart. We are not anti-anything. We are pro-American and go straight down the center of the road on Americanism and if we bump some other organization coming in the opposite direction, that is their lookout. Inevitably we are bumping the UAW."

The UAW, the Klan spokesman said, is suffering from too much power, the same ailment, he added, which caused the death of the old KKK.

"Industry had much to do with the present trouble," he said, "but now the union is carrying matters to an extreme in the other direction by holding guns to the workers' heads and saying 'join up or quit working.' It seems that too much power hurts anyone. In the old days the Klan elected officers in this county and then recalled them if we disapproved of them. We wouldn't even co-operate with other organizations that had the same program. Eventually the people got sick of us and kicked us out. That is what is going to happen to the UAW."

AGAINST DEMOCRATS

The Klansman stressed that "only the men who were strong enough and sincere enough to remain Klansmen in spite of the ridicule" have stayed on the membership lists during the recent quiet years. He took for the KKK credit for the Republican victory in Genesee County in the recent spring election. He said the Klan particularly supported Eugene B. Elliott for re-election as state superintendent of public instruction and was opposed to the Democratic party as a friend of the UAW and to UAW supported candidates for the Flint School Board.

In the election all Republicans were given a majority by the Genesee voters. Elliott, with 18,702 votes, ran second only to Frank Cody, who got 16,096 votes in his race for a place on the State Board of Education. An interesting feature was that the county, which gave 35,248

votes to help re-elect President Roosevelt last fall and only 13,988 to Landon, in the more recent election gave only 10,239 votes to Murray D. VanWagoner, who led the Democratic ticket while his Republican opponent for state highway commissioner got 10,826. The UAW school board candidates were showed under.

Coleman said his position with the new Employes' Association is strictly that of "temporary advisor and spokesman" and that he plans to withdraw as soon as a responsible president is found to head the group.

WORKERS ELIGIBLE

The Employes' Association charges a 50-cent initiation fee and dues are 50 cents a month as compared with the \$1 charged in Flint for UAW initiation and monthly dues. Eligible are all auto workers not holding supervisory jobs which entitle them to hire and fire. This bars foremen, union members said. The Employes' Association is not associated with the American Federation of Labor, Coleman said, and is not affiliated with any other "independent" union.

"This organization started," Coleman said, "as a result of a wave of intense bitterness which has swept Flint since the UAW got started. The UAW is not an orthodox labor union but a group of racketeers. I don't think the interest of UAW leaders in labor is bona fide."

"We hold that the recent strikes in Michigan were purely for promotional purposes and that they were not inspired by grievances and did not settle any grievances. After they were over the UAW began to slug and coerce and intimidate non-member workers. I personally do not believe there are 5,000 bona-fide and sincere UAW men in Flint."

HITS UAW LEADERS

"The UAW is not using the American system and philosophy. Its leaders are anarchistic. They can't differentiate between the Russian peasant consciousness and that of the American working man."

"The auto workers are smart. They realize that wages can only go so high and that then the forthcoming benefits will be limited by disproportionate rises in prices and an eventual crash which will land right on the shoulders of the working man."

Coleman did not reveal the strength of his organization but said that an estimate of 6,000 members printed recently by a Flint newspaper was "very conservative." He said recent "unauthorized" UAW sit-downs led to "floods of membership applications at our headquarters."

"We expect," he said, "to have 20,000 members by the time the UAW-General Motors truce ends. Before then, however, I will have retired from the picture. I am just at home because the men figured they could trust a clergyman not to sell them out to either the UAW or the General Motors Corp."

Officers of the Employes' Association

at present are John Wilson and Joseph Smith, Buick workers, and George Walker and Arthur Rumsey, Chevrolet workers, who form an advisory board. Edward Bowers and Paul Klieber, both of Chevrolet, are, respectively, treasurer and secretary.

THREATS CHARGED

Walker was cited by Coleman as one of the officers of the new union who has received numerous threats. He stated that UAW men had threatened to "meet him with a rope some afternoon" when he leaves work and as a result a request for police protection has been made of Joseph R. Joseph, prosecuting attorney. Joseph admitted such a request had been made and said he had passed it on to the police department. Coleman said that, in addition to the threats, UAW members had booed Walker, followed him down the street cursing at him, thrown cheese at him, called him a "rat" and slashed his overcoat as it hung in the factory dining room.

The workings of the Protestant Action Association and of the Black Legion were explained by Thomas, who said that he is not a legionnaire.

"We are absolutely separate from Coleman's organization," he said, "but we have the same ideas. Our object is to fight John L. Lewis and Franklin D. Roosevelt and bring the United States back to normalcy."

TAKES MIDDLE COURSE

Thomas explained that while most of the KKK and Legion members are interested in the Action Association, only representatives from the other organizations attend meetings and they return and "try and sell their parent groups on supporting the program drafted at the association meetings." He said the Action Association was fighting Catholic supporters of a new parochial school subsidizing bill but that they are co-operating with the Catholics in their fight against Communism.

Thomas also denied that the Black Legion has been materially hurt by the sensational expose in Wayne County of the organization and the jailing on murder and other charges of many of its members.

"Why should it hurt the Legionnaires out here," he asked. "They are good Americans."

The cause of the KKK was considerably advanced in Genesee County recently, Thomas said, when James A. Colese, grand dragon of the Klan for Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky, came here to make an anti-Communist address.

Robert Travis, general organizer in Flint for the UAW, branded all of the new and rejuvenated organizations as "too trivial to worry about."

BLAMES GM

"For every 1,000 members that Coleman can show I will guarantee to produce 10,000 UAW men," he said. "The other night the Employes' Association had a meeting and I sent some of our boys over to listen in and count the audience. They identified 40 association members and 120 UAW men. This is just another stunt on General Motors' part. They want another organization so they can forestall any demand from us for a closed shop and so that they will be ready to make use of any slip we may make."

Travis admitted that UAW men in the plants had wanted to take physical action against Walker and other Employes' Association members and said he had "dissuaded" them. He also admitted that he had suggested that "their lives can be made unpleasant without touching them."