

Social Responsibilities Round Table Newsletter ALA

NEWSLETTER #58

ISSN 0065-9096

JANUARY 1981

MIDWINTER 1981, D. C.

schedule of SRRT meetings

Friday, Jan. 30

Coretta Scott King Award Dinner
Washington Hilton, Holmer Rm
8-10 pm

Saturday, Jan. 31

Union Task Force, Sheraton, Ohio Rm,
11:30-12:30 pm
Feminist TF, Sheraton, Dover Rm,
11:30-12:30 pm

Sunday, Feb. 1

Peace Information Exchange,
Sheraton, Rm 27, Hall C,
8-9 am

Alternatives in Print, Sheraton, Rm 27,
Hall C, 9:30-12:30 pm

Action Council, Shoreham, Club Rm B,
2-4 pm

Clearinghouse, Shoreham, Council Rm,
4:30-5:30 pm

Ethnic Materials, Sheraton, Rockville
Rm, 4:30-5:30 pm

By-Laws Committee, Shoreham, Press
Rm, 8-10 pm

Monday, Feb. 2

Council I, 9-11 am
Ethnic Materials, Sheraton, Rm 33,
Hall C, 2-4 pm

Monday, cont'd

Gay Liberation, Sheraton, Congressional
Rm, 2-4 pm

Action Council, Sheraton, Richmond Rm,
4:30-5:30 pm

Tuesday, Feb. 3

LAMA Racism & Sexism Awareness Discussion
Group, 9:30-11 am

Council II, 9-11 am

Action Council, Sheraton, Baltimore Rm,
11:30-12:30 pm

Feminist TF, Sheraton, Dover Rm,
2-4 pm

Tools, Consciousness-Raising, Sheraton,
Rm 17, Hall C, 2-4 pm

wednesday, Feb. 4

Union TF, Sheraton, Woodley Rm,
9:30-11 am

Council III, 2-5:30 pm

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Re: Sources, p. 6

and more.....

Whitewashing White Racists: *Junior Scholastic* and the KKK *

by Ruth Chames

News media are reporting more and more incidents of Ku Klux Klan terrorism and murder, rising Klan membership, frequent Klan rallies and demonstrations, increasing verbal, written and physical attacks on Blacks, other Third World peoples, Jews, gays and union activists. Despite all this, a Klan member recently won the Democratic Congressional primary in the most populous district in California. Equally ominous are reports of increasing Klan recruitment in high schools around the country.

Given these developments and the Klan's history of bloodshed and terror, educators and parents should expect a recent article about the Klan in *Junior Scholastic*, the magazine for sixth to eighth graders (published by Scholastic Magazines), to be a well-documented exposé.

The article, entitled "Kids in the KKK," offers a few brief and distorted general comments about the Klan, information about (and the views of) two young Klan leaders, the views of a few students who appear to have little knowledge of the activities and history of the Klan, plus some speculation on "why" some young people join the Klan. By ignoring certain facts and misrepresenting others, the article gives a deceptive picture of the KKK.

The kindest interpretation of the article is that *JS*'s editorial board wanted to present a "balanced" picture of the Klan, though why they

demagoguery or its virulent hatred of Blacks, Jews, Catholics, gays, labor organizations and others it deems unacceptable. Nor will they learn that the Klan's ideology of white supremacy has been—and continues to be—a direct threat for those who do not meet the Klan's "standards." Note, too, how the Klan's activities are described in the past tense—as if crosses are not still being burned in attempts to intimidate Black people (hasn't the author of the piece been reading the newspaper lately?). And why does the text say only that the Klan wanted to "warn" Black families—bad enough in itself, certainly, but again far from the whole story. Children need to learn that in its 100-plus years of existence the Klan has been responsible for the death, torture, mutilation and lynching of countless Black people, not to mention the desecration of Jewish houses of worship, violent attacks on labor organizations and the terrorization of numerous other groups.

The article's attitude toward the Klan becomes clearer in its description of a recent KKK rally. As if to emphasize that the Klan's rather intemperate behavior is a thing of the past, it paints a bucolic picture of current practices:

This demonstration is peaceful. The Klansmen have gathered to hold a ceremony and make speeches. Solemnly, they raise one outstretched arm toward the burning cross. This is the Klan salute.

What does this mean? Are the weapons Aaron's—or perhaps his family's? Should Aaron be considered innocent until proven guilty? Is there any connection between Aaron's Klan membership and the armory? The acts of violence that the Klan has always directed at Black people—and others—are not discussed. The possibility that Aaron's arsenal is a direct result of Klan policy is not even considered. Why doesn't the author quote someone like Imperial Wizard Bill Wilkinson, a Klan leader who says of the guns carried by his men, "They're not for hunting rabbits. They are for wasting people." Or what about Wilkinson's statement, "We're drumming into the Youth Corps that there are other uses for baseball bats than hitting home-runs."

An interview with Roy, another leader of the Klan's Youth Corps, also presents a biased viewpoint without comment. Roy reports that members of his Youth Corps get together once a month to "exchange views and have fun." (Golly gee, do they go on picnics and outings?) To make matters worse, Roy states,

I joined the Klan because I had a lot of trouble with black kids when I was younger. . . . A person has to look at what's happening around the world. Take Africa. . . . More and more countries there are turning to black-majority rule. Here in this country, we have affirmative action programs that give jobs to black people before more qualified white people are hired. What we need in this country is white-majority

man is hard to imagine. (An unkind but perhaps more realistic thought is that the editors did not want to offend readers sympathetic to the Klan.) Whatever the motives, many readers (see "Reactions" on the following page) find the article a decidedly *unbalanced* apologia for the Klan, biased in its presentation, naive—to put it mildly—in its lack of historical perspective.

What could children learn from the article? Given that most of the sixth to eighth graders at whom *JS* is aimed probably don't know much about the Klan, they could easily take the article's description of that organization at face value:

The KKK is a secretive organization that preaches the superiority of white people over all other races. The burning cross is part of their secret ritual. *In the past* [emphasis added], such crosses have been burned on the lawn [sic] of black families to warn them that the Klan could strike their homes. For years, the Klan *used* [emphasis added] its robes and ritual to terrorize people.

The paragraph quoted above—like the rest of the article—is insidious; it omits or misrepresents historical facts. The article fails to tell the whole story. Young readers who don't know about the Klan are told nothing of the Klan's terrorist attacks, its racist

and its use of the cross to terrorize, it is criminal to describe any such scene as "peaceful." (The Klan's use of Christian symbols and its version of Christian doctrine are nowhere discussed.)

The article continuously misrepresents the Klan's role, making it seem as wholesome as apple pie. It presents an interview with Aaron Morrison, an eighteen-year-old "Grand Dragon" and Klan Youth Corps leader. Such a nice boy, Aaron joined the Klan "because he saw too many of his fellow students taking drugs and wasting their lives." As if that weren't inducement enough, the Klan, says Aaron: "talks about the threat of communism. They also talk about the need for tightly-knit families—that's what keeps kids from going astray." Here's the Klan as defenders of the moral life. Are readers to assume that to be anti-Klan is to be pro-drugs, pro-loosely knit—or, even worse, pro-unraveled—families?

Only in the last paragraph of the interview with Aaron does the issue of violence come up, and even there it's not clearly dealt with:

Aaron denies that the Klan would use violence. But as *JS* went to press, Aaron was being sought by police for questioning. Two shots had been fired into the home of a black family across the street. A police search of Aaron's home uncovered unlicensed rifles, pistols, brass knuckles, and bayonets hidden in the attic.

There is nothing to counter Roy's perspective. Nothing about the history of colonialism or liberation struggles in Africa, nothing about the long history of discrimination in this country that affirmative action programs are designed in part to redress, nothing that indicates that this country *is* under white-majority rule, much to the detriment of minority peoples. Without such information, how can young readers refute Roy's statement? How much more likely it is that white children who have "trouble" with Black children may think that the Klan does have "the answer." (The article, needless to say, does not deal with the "trouble" that Blacks have with white children.)

To "get some other views," the *JS* author interviewed some seventh and eighth graders who do not share the Klan's perspective. Unfortunately, none of those interviewed have much knowledge of the Klan (nor do any of them seem to be Black, Jewish, Catholic, Asian American or any other group threatened by the Klan). Says one,

The problem with the Klan is that they want to force the things they believe in on other people. Only their way is right, according to them. They try to tell other people how they should feel and what they should think.

Says another youngster, "The Klan is against everyone except themselves." Again, an accurate but limited view of the Klan. How much more young readers would have learned if the author had interviewed adults better informed about the threat posed by the Klan.

(cont'd. on page 6)

* Reprinted with permission from the Interracial Books for Children Bulletin, vol. 11, no. 5, 1980.



Coordinator's Report

To the SRRT Membership:

It is a pleasure to serve as your coordinator for the coming years. A strong leadership functions best through a strong and active membership. Those of us on Action Council need and seek more communication from you on a regular basis. It is especially necessary in this time of changing political philosophy that we speak out strongly and clearly on the importance of our social responsibilities as librarians. The leadership of Action Council asks to hear from you about what you feel are the main issues you feel we should be addressing. In addition, there are several in-house concerns to be approached this year:

- 1) membership. We want to encourage those people who have become passive to renew their participation in an active way. We also want to find new people and invite them to join us and our Task Forces.
- 2) the SRRT Newsletter. Our highest visibility is provided through our newsletter; this is our most important tool in telling people who we are and what we are doing. We have had few people during the last several years willing to put in the kind of work required to publish on a regular basis. Please consider running for election to Clearinghouse and make a much-needed contribution. Those who are already working on the newsletter need your support.
- 3) elections for Action Council and Clearinghouse are approaching. The deadline for nominations is Feb. 15, 1981; please have your paperwork in to me by that date. If you do not have the regular forms available from ALA headquarters, provide the following information by letter: name, work and home phones and addresses, educational background, work experience, current job title, and a 150 word statement of professional concerns. It should be understood that election to Action Council or Clearinghouse is a commitment on your part to attend meetings on a regular basis and accept a share of the responsibility for the work involved.
- 4) Action Council hopes to place recommendations for the revision of our by-laws before the membership in San Francisco next June for your discussion and approval. A by-laws revision committee has been established and will meet during Midwinter. I hope to report back to you on their discussion in the next newsletter. Please let me know of any suggestions you may have.

I look forward to hearing from you and wish the best to you during the coming year.

Barbara Pruett
2708 Porter Street, NW
Washington, DC 20008

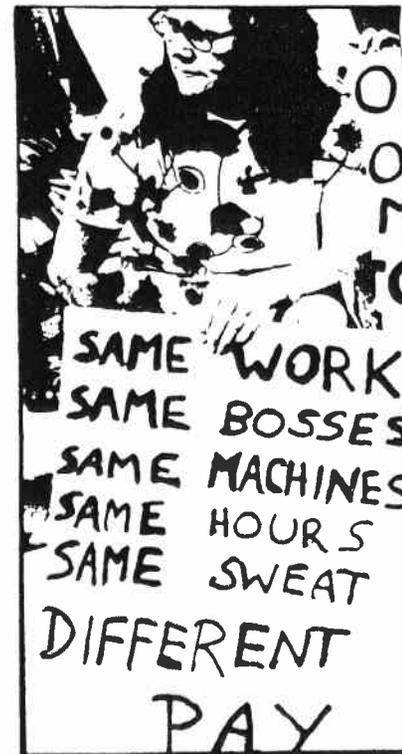


Fight Resurgent Racism

An upsurge in the activities of the Ku Klux Klan and various Nazi groups has been reported throughout the country. We are particularly interested in the influence and effect that these groups are having on libraries, on schools, and on young people in general. Do you know of any such relevant activities in your community? (Bookstores in Freeport, Maine, for example, report that KKK and Nazi literature has been surreptitiously inserted in their books.)

We are also interested in learning what actions librarians, teachers and others are taking to counter the Klan and Nazi groups and activities. Please write to SRRT and/or to the Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1841 Broadway, New York, N. Y. 10023 if you have such information.

The National Anti-Klan Network is a loose grouping of organizations that have come together because of their common concern about the resurgence of the KKK and other racist groups in America. If you are interested in learning more about this new network, contact Akinshiju Ola at 348 Convent Avenue, NY NY 10031, (212) 926-5757. Or attend the meetings in Washington D. C. on January 31 and February 1, 1981.



WANTED



SRRT members are urged to consider running for elective office in ALA. Council, Action Council and Clearinghouse seats will be available, and SRRT is pledged to assist its members in their campaigns. Don't forget to bring your petition of signitures to Action Council meetings in Washington, D.C. at Midwinter, 1981 so that SRRT members can sign them. A list of candidates from SRRT's ranks will be published in the next, pre-election issue. ALA Council needs you and other SRRT members to fill the seats of retiring Councilors.

ACTION COUNCIL MINUTES

annual conference, summer '80

submitted by Brad Chambers, secretary

June 29, 2-4 p.m. -- The meeting began with a discussion culminating in an unanimous condemnation of the "Survey of the Priorities of Members of ALA". Betty Turock said she had been hearing a lot of talk about ALA being better off if there were less diversity of opinion within the membership. Herb Biblo felt the survey findings had been tilted so it would appear that ALA members were growing less concerned with the issues of social responsibility. Jackie Eubanks observed that this was an insult to the ALA membership who had created SRRT in the first place. Jim Dwyer suggested that the seemingly low priority assigned by members responding to issues of social responsibility in the survey resulted from an erroneous classification of what does and does not constitute "social responsibility". Herb asked, "Who determined what social responsibility is?". Jackie further commented that the result of the survey findings, if accepted as valid, would subvert democratic processes within ALA. Michael Diodati suggested that an ALA resolution be drawn up criticizing the survey findings, and Mary Biblo proposed that a questionnaire be distributed at an ALA membership meeting asking for interpretations of "social responsibility". An Ad Hoc Committee consisting of Betty Turock, Jim Dwyer, and Brad Chambers was then set up to prepare an analysis of the survey and survey findings and to develop implementing strategy. (See SRRT Newsletter #57 for that analysis).

The next issue discussed was ALA conference streamlining and new schedules. A number of objections to the streamlining plan were raised,

On the agenda was the question of how to expand SRRT's membership. One suggestion was that SRRT take advantage of the free page advertising available to ALA component groups. Another was that a special introductory issue of the SRRT Newsletter be prepared and sent to the entire ALA membership. Another suggestion was that this special Newsletter be sent to the students at all schools of library science and that particular pains be taken to reach student associations. There was also a suggestion that machinery be set up to establish state branches of SRRT, similar to the state branches of IFC.

Brad Chambers proposed that SRRT prepare a letter criticizing an article on the Ku Klux Klan in the May issue of Junior Scholastic magazine. The article attempts to be a "balanced" view of the Klan and results in a grossly distorted picture of the Klan. Copies of the article were distributed, and a vote to send a letter of criticism to the publishers, Scholastic Book Services, was unanimous. The content of the letter was discussed and the points to make, approved. Brad, Elizabeth Dworkin and Larry Grece were commissioned to write the letter. (See copy of letter sent, page 5 of this issue).

Elliot Shore presented a report on the activities of the Alternatives in Print Task Force. New members considered the report extremely useful in showing them how SRRT task forces operate and their potential for accomplishment. Elliot also introduced Harriett Greiser who is to be AIP's new coordinator.

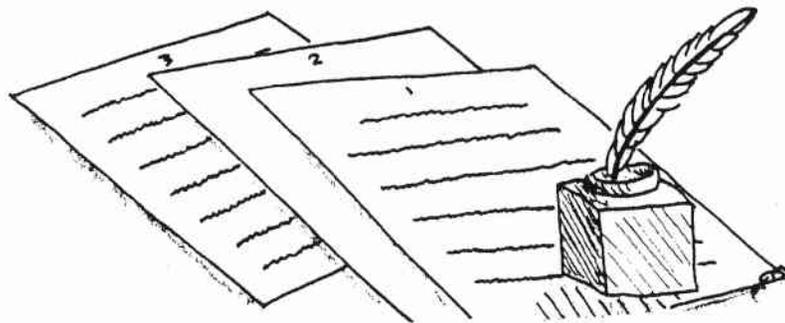
Elliot next introduced Jackie Eubanks. Jackie made a presentation for monies to support a new

(See SRRT Newsletter #51 for that analysis).

The next issue discussed was ALA conference streamlining and new schedules. A number of objections to the streamlining plan were raised, and the concensus was that the plan would be self-defeating. How to keep SRRT's flexibility in the face of this plan was a special concern. Brad Chambers commented that the streamlining proposal and the Survey of Priorities were part of the same manipulative package, of a right-wing tightening up of process within ALA to give more control to headquarters.

Jim Dwyer presented the text of the SRRT brochure that had been assigned to him. Betty, in revealing a balance in the SRRT treasury of over \$10,000, suggested that SRRT could afford a professional layout and printing job for the brochure.

The proposal for a promotional campaign to increase SRRT membership is to be presented at the coming combined SRRT Action Council and membership meeting June 30, and members will be asked for suggestions on implementing it.



June 30 -- The meeting combined Action Council and membership meetings to take advantage of the three-hour time allotment. New members had a considerable number of questions about SRRT, and old members wanted to express gripes, so that the first part of the meeting was devoted to discussing these questions. Paramount concerns were 1) need to keep the SRRT membership list properly updated, so that members will receive the SRRT Newsletter on time.

new coordinator.

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Elliot next introduced Jackie Eubanks. Jackie made a presentation for monies to support a new project, an Alternative Distributors Guide, which is to be incorporated in AIP and also separately issued through the ERIC network. For this project Jackie presented a budget of \$1,000 for typing, postage and printing. She pointed out the AIP has not requested funds from SRRT for the past ten years. The budget request was approved.

July 2, 11:30a.m. - 12:30 p.m. -- The following officers were elected: Betty Turock to continue as Treasurer; Barbara Pruett as Coordinator; Michael Diodati as Secretary; Richard Higginbotham as Task Force Coordinator.

Task Force budgets for 1980-81 were approved as follows:

- Tools for Consciousness-Raising, \$4000
- Gay Task Force, \$400
- Library Union Task Force, \$400
- Ethnic Materials, \$250
- Newsletter, \$3,500
- Coretta Scott King Task Force, \$100

The budget for the Feminist Task Force (formerly the Task Force on Women) remains unchanged from last year.

The request from the AIP for a loan of \$1,100 (in addition to the \$1,000 budgeted for the new Alternative Distributors Guide) to be paid back from royalties was considered apart from the other task force budgets. AIP is to prepare an itemized budget for mail submission to Action Council members.

For refreshments at the joint SRRT and IFRT program on the Racism and Sexism Awareness Resolution, \$60 was authorized to add to the previously authorized \$200.

A resolution submitted by Michael Diodati to form an organization of all "ethnics" within ALA for submission to ALA membership was rejected.

A resolution calling for voting rights for residents of the District of Columbia was approved.

THE SPEAKER: controversy resurfaces

by Steve Greenfield

Last November 8, a showing of the controversial film, "The Speaker", drew a strong response from a gathering of about fifty people at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. Most of the group had come to attend a three-day workshop, sponsored by the Academic Freedom Group (AFG), a grouping of ten educational organizations which, according to AFG's literature, are "united to deal with the current threats to academic freedom." The film was shown on the last day, which included other activities designed to encourage attendees to return to their respective states to form AFG chapters.

"The Speaker," which was made by the ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom, has generated sharp opposition both inside and outside the ALA mainly because of its questionable representation of First Amendment issues and its racist stereotypes.

At the conclusion of "The Speaker", a Black woman said "I can't believe what I have just seen," and that the movie had literally "made me sick". A Black man rose to complain about the racial stereotyping. He said he was "disgusted," that the Black characters in the film were either "grossly caricatured nationalists" or "super hip

A white woman from the audience countered the film's message that anti-racist blacks constitute the threat to First Amendment rights. She said that the major threat to the First Amendment "comes from the Right." She called for a new commitment to human rights.

Of the nine people who spoke during the discussion, all were opposed to the film. After the ninth speaker, AFG leaders abruptly closed the session amid calls of "censorship" from the audience. "The Speaker" was shown despite the fact that one AFG member, the National Education Association, had rescinded its original approval of the film.

The November meeting in Washington, D.C. was the sixth of a series of eight planned regional AFG workshops around the nation. The two areas not yet covered by AFG are the plain states and northwestern areas of the U.S.

It has been learned that the major administrative work of the AFG is being conducted by the staff of the Office for Intellectual Freedom.

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SRRT WRITES

To the Editors of Scholastic Magazines:

We are shocked by the Junior Scholastic article. It ignores and therefore reinforces institutional racism (a) by sympathetically presenting the young people who join the Klan; (b) by the use of the past tense to describe the Klan's acts of violence; and (c) by ignoring the continuation of terrorist activities in the present, as witnessed recently in North Carolina.

As librarians, we depend on accurate media reporting to provide information to our users. The JS article is destructively inadequate in this respect.

As library workers, we commend the coverage of the same topic in Southern Exposure magazine's summer 1980 issue in "Just Like the Scouts: The Klan Youth Corps" (the issue, which contains a special section on the Klan, is available for \$3 from P.O. Box 531, Durham, N.C.).

-Social Responsibility Round Table,
American Library Association

The *Junior Scholastic* article is but one of several recent media treatments that have misrepresented the Klan or presented its members in a favorable light. Earlier this year on March 10, *The New York Times* ran two pieces sympathetic to Klan members on its Op-Ed page. (In one piece, a woman wrote of the "fine, gentle, humane" men in her family who had been Klan members; the other writer felt guilty for hating a Klansman she met.) The March issue of *Esquire* ran "Ain't Nothin' You Can Do But Join the Klan," in which readers were invited to "meet the men of the KKK" through sympathetic portraits of Klan members.

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Whitewashing White Racists

(cont'd. from page 2)

Because the children interviewed don't know much about the Klan—or understand the threat it poses—they see the organization as irrelevant. One student reports that at her school, "No one here is singled out because of their color or race." Others echo her perception. "Racial problems don't really touch us here," reports a seventh grader. "Maybe that's because there aren't that many minorities here." Nobody talks about the realities of racism in our society. (The "racial problems" that one child mentions are, after all, usually taken to be open conflict between Blacks and whites—and there is usually an implication that Blacks instigated the "problem.") The closest that anyone comes to condemning the Klan is a student who says that the Klan thinks what they are doing is right "in the same way that Adolph Hitler thought he was right." Since most children know very little about Adolph Hitler—or the consequences of his racist policies—this statement hardly counters the pro-Klan statements. To counter the pro-Klan arguments that author should have interviewed anti-Klan activists; surely members of the Anti-Defamation League, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference or any member of the National Anti Klan Network would have been happy to say a few words. The children quoted simply are not knowledgeable enough to be effective spokespeople for the anti-Klan perspective.

Given children's ignorance of the Klan, it's not surprising that Klan membership is increasing among young people. The *JS* article glosses over the Klan's recruitment program, although a little alarm-raising would not have been amiss. As *Time* magazine noted:

Today's KKK units are also trying to recruit children. In more than a dozen cities throughout the country, Klan sympathizers have distributed leaflets to high school students asking: "Are you 'fed up to here' with black, chicano and Yang [Asian] criminals who break into lockers and steal your clothes and wallets?" The solution, according to the leaflet, is to join the Klan Youth Corps. At a KKK summer camp in Jefferson County, Ala., robed counselors teach girls and boys ages ten to eighteen the fundamentals of race supremacy and how to use guns.*

It couldn't have been easy to discuss the Klan without mentioning racism, but the *JS* article does it—and that's undoubtedly its worst flaw.

Nowhere does the article discuss the Klan within the context of a racist society. It ignores the pervasive racism that led to the formation of the Klan, that kept the Klan going and that feeds the recent resurgence of Klan activity. (An excellent article in *Freedomways*, Vol. 20, No. 1, entitled "The Ku Klux Klan Mentality—A Threat in the 1980's," provides the perspective the *JS* article lacks.) The fact that the Klan has been a constant presence in U.S. history for over 100 years—and not an aberration or the refuge of a few extremists as it is usually presented—is never discussed in the *JS* article. What has spurred Klan activities in the past and why the Klan is reviving now are also ignored. Surely these concepts would be valid and valuable topics for classroom discussion.

Instead of an historical perspective, the *JS* article gives young readers a psychiatric approach—with Dr. Joyce Brothers' comments on why some young people join the Klan. Dr. Brothers notes some of the factors that may motivate such children—a need for

an explanation that's partially true. However, it's irresponsible—and totally inaccurate—to suggest that such factors are the *only* or even the main reasons that children join the Klan. (It also ignores the fact that many parents "guide" their children right into the KKK.) To focus on psychological factors obscures the role that institutional racism plays in our society, that the Klan enjoys considerable power and support in many areas, that racism is part and parcel of our U.S. heritage. (It should be noted that the material accompanying the *JS* article—a brief history of the Klan, a teacher's guide and questions for students—also ignores the realities of the Klan's history as well as racism. The strongly political nature of the Klan's activities—beginning with its successful efforts to disenfranchise Black voters during Reconstruction—is also ignored.)

The Klan has the last word in the *JS* article. The piece concludes with a statement from Klan Youth Corps leader Aaron Morrison:

What the Klan is trying to do . . . is to get the kids off the streets and give them something to do. We in the Klan believe that it's the Klan Youth Corps that holds the key to the future of the Klan. We have a saying, you know. It goes:

"Whoever has the youth has the future."

Aaron is right—whoever has the youth does have the future. And that is why we should all be alarmed at an article such as the one that *JS* offers. We need to help children learn more about—and become motivated to change—an unjust social system, not present them with a whitewashed version of a racist terror organization that threatens the very survival of so many people in this society. □

although a little alarm-raising would not have been amiss. As *Time* magazine noted:

ers notes some of the factors that may motivate such children—a need for structure, a desire to feel important, lack of parental guidance, etc. Again,

... means the very survival of so many people in this society. □

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**Time*, November 19, 1979.

Re: Sources



Given the current Klan emphasis on recruiting teenagers, it is particularly important that young people get an accurate picture of the Klan. There are, unhappily, only two books about the Klan for young people -- Hoods: The Story of the Ku Klux Klan by Robert P. Ingalls (Putnam, 1979) and The Ku Klux Klan: America's Recurring Nightmare by Fred J. Cook (Messner, 1980). Unfortunately, like most materials for adults, both books depict the Klan as an aberration, a group of "hoodlums" exploiting people's fears, rather than making it clear that the Klan is but one aspect of a racist society.

Hoods begins with a good chapter on Reconstruction that stresses the Klan's role in the maintenance of white supremacy and its terrorism against Blacks and sympathetic whites who threatened white dominance. Although later chapters focus on the Klan's internal corruption and its anti-white (particularly anti-Catholic) activities -- often at the neglect of Klan violence toward Blacks, the book does provide a good overview of Klan practices and Klan practices in this country.

The Ku Klux Klan also offers a history of the Klan. After a brief look at recent events, it begins with an unbelievably bad section on Reconstruction, with text that could have been lifted

from some Klux manual of 1870. Instead of providing an accurate picture of the progressive legislation and opportunities that Reconstruction offered, the book gives young readers the now-discredited view that Reconstruction was a period of drunken legislators and marauding freed Blacks. (And what is one to say of a book that repeats such stereotypic myths as "The blacks on the southern plantations had been traditionally a docile people?") The rise of the Klan is essentially blamed on its victims. There is no mention of the estimated 3,500 Blacks and whites who were killed by the Klan during Reconstruction, nor the countless others who were flogged or beaten during that time. The flaws of the first chapters far outweigh the merits of the later chapters which are particularly good in detailing the collusion between the Klan and white businessmen and law enforcement officials -- including J. Edgar Hoover.

It is a pity that no book exists that will help children truly understand the Klan's role in this society; until that perfect book comes along, Hoods is the better choice.

Ruth Charnes

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