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Klans, Keagles, and Such, 1921.

LECTURE BY RABBI ABBA H. SILVER,
ON "KLANs, KLEAGLES AND SUCH," AT
THE TEMPLE, SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER
30, 1921, CLEVELAND, OHIO.



AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES



JOSEPH T. KRAUS
Shorthand
Reporter
CLEVELAND

What has arrested attention in this matter of the Ku Klux Klan is not the novelty of its objectives but the novelty of its methods. The secrecy which attends its ritual has a dramatic appeal for most people. Secret pass words, secret rites, secret initiations, outlandish and terrifying dress--all these things mean much to most people. People like to be mystified; they enjoy it. There is a play now holding the attention of the theatre-going public in the city of Cleveland, called "The Bat" -- a marvelous play, I hear people say. And the whole stunt of the play is the suggestive power of the mysterious--unknown voices, and a darkened room, and knocking from unseen hands, and groans coming over the telephone wire. And the audience sits there and gasps, and giggles, and shivers; and a good time is had by all.

People like that sort of thing, because those people are just grown-up children who have lost the innocence of childhood and who have acquired the ignorance of old age. Mr. Thomas Edison a few days ago remarked that only two per cent. of human beings can understand a simple fact simply told. I have always maintained that Thomas Edison was too much of an optimist. It is surprising, isn't it, how much like children grown-ups often act, speak and think. You and I have seen--I know many of you have--grown-up people, staid, respectable

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heads of families, at lodge meetings go through the weirdest sort of stunts and gesticulations, and dress themselves in garbs that a Turk would blush at--all for the sake of being a member of a lodge, of being different.

So that the secrecy which attends the ritual of the Ku Klux Klan is, to my mind, responsible for most of the excitement in this land caused by it. But that secrecy should not be the cause for denouncing that organization, for other organizations have secret rituals and secret ceremonies. There is no reason to interfere with people who like to play at Hallowe'en throughout the year. Somebody once said that it is the inalienable right of every citizen to make a fool of himself.

But what is peculiarly obnoxious in this organization is, to my mind, its program of hate and its methods of terrorism. Were the leaders of this organization content to confine their activities and to carry out their discipline among the initiated members of that organization, no one could find fault with them; but when they assume to impose their will and to execute their will upon others; when they arrogate unto themselves the privilege of prosecutor, and judge, and jury, and executioner; when they take the law into their own hands for whatever purpose, however exalted their objective may be--then they are establishing a super-government, an empire within an empire; then they are proceeding to undermine the

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foundations of our republic.

For no civilization, my friends, can endure when, instead of the legitimately appointed authorities, there are secret, self-appointed men and women, who defy, or disregard, or flaunt the authority of the legally constituted government. Don't you see how that opens the way for all sorts of private abuse? For vendetta, for vengeance, for whims and tyrannies of all sorts? An organization such as that must be crushed if a republic is to endure.

The peculiar viciousness of an organization of this kind is also the fact that it organizes hate. It gives permanence to a mood which would otherwise be temporary and transitory; it congeals a temper and it creates vested interests in perpetuating hate; it makes of the propaganda of hate a business. And then it becomes tremendously dangerous when you make a business of anti-something; then the problem becomes menacing.

I understand that the Imperial Wizard of this enterprise, Colonel Simmons (everyone down South is a colonel), testified before the House Rules Committee that Mr. Edward Young Clarke, the chief klieagle, I believe, and his associate, a Mrs. Elizabeth Tyler--who has a stainless reputation among the members of the klan, having been fined but once for immorality,--that these two received something like eight dollars for every ten dollars paid in

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initiation fee by members who joined this organization; of whom Mr. Barnum once said one is born every minute.

Now, when you consider that the conservative estimate of the membership of this organization is something like ninety thousand, there is a sum of approximately seven hundred and twenty thousand dollars which falls to the share of these supreme and exalted kleagles. Anybody could tell you that that is not bad business.

Now these people and their henchmen become interested in preserving that mood which makes an organization like this possible. It pays. It paid Bismarck, in the early 70's, who was at first a liberal, to turn against the liberals and to become one of the guiding spirits of German anti-Semitism. It paid him because Bismarck saw the rising tide of liberalism in Germany. Bismarck saw that the privileges and the prerogatives of the intrenched classes were being endangered by the grumbling, mutinous spirit of the masses, and so he turned against liberalism.

And Bismarck turned against the Jews, who were liberals; there were all too many liberals among the Jews for the peace of mind of Bismarck, and so Bismarck determined to make liberalism unsavory and unattractive by characterizing it as Jewish. It paid.

The clerical champions in Germany, in the midst of their Kultur campaign, when they were struggling against

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the secularization of the public schools of Germany,--it paid them to turn anti-Semites because they saw liberalism undermining their power, and their prestige, and their influence in Germany; and so they, too, determined to make liberalism obnoxious by identifying it with Jews. And it was not an unrelated fact at all that Pope Pius IX, in 1872, found it necessary to attack the Jews in a papal letter before the priests of the curia. It paid.

It paid the yunkers of Germany and their lackeys, the Protestant ministers, to take over the anti-Semitic propaganda of the Catholic element and carry it on, because the aristocracy of Germany, the yunker element, saw the rising tide of progressive sentiment, as a result of the war of 1870, threatening to engulf them; and so Adolph Stecker, the court chaplain, becomes a mouthpiece of the new German anti-Semitism.

While I speak of Adolph Stecker, it occurs to my mind how peculiar it is that so many of these movements of hate are inspired or led by ministers of the gospel of love. Stecker was a court chaplain; Simmons, I understand, is an ex-Baptist minister; Cameron, who is editor, I understand, of the "Dearborn," is an ex-Methodist minister. One wonders what essential relation there is between the ministry of Christianity, the religion of "Love thine enemy," with a movement which lives and thrives on hate. And one wonders how these Steckers, and Simmons, and

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Camerons, and that entire klan, would welcome that foreigner, that gentle Jew of Galilee, who was not only a foreigner and a Semite but a pacifist as well, in their midst.

I say, it pays. It paid the clericals of France after the Franco-Prussian War, when they saw their power passing from their hands, to instigate and foment anti-Jewish sentiment in France, which culminated in the Dreyfuss case. Gambetta was too much of a liberal for them. Gambetta some three hundred ministers in France, and so he was damned as a Jew from one end of France to the other.

It paid the Tories of England, and the London Post, to fight the Jew, because the Jew is occupying those positions which they covet. Lord Reading is in the way, and Montague is in the way, and Samuels is in the way; they would like those positions of influence. And what is more to the point, these Readings and Montagues and Samuels are liberals who have caught the spirit of the new day, and are determined to bring that spirit of liberalism into the policies and programs of the British Empire. And so it pays them to denounce and attack the Jew.

Whenever there is a sudden movement of anti-Jewish feeling in the world, look not within or about you, but look above--there is some class vitally interested in keeping the fires of hate and hostility, of passion and

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prejudice, alive. Look to the top!

The program of the Kl Klux Klan is a very broad one. As you know, they do not like the Negro; they do not like the Catholic; they do not like the Jew; they do not like the foreigner. They do like themselves. The program is nothing new; it is the old No-nothing Party. But the strange thing is that this takes place seventy years later; after the Great War, when these people who they do not like--the Catholics and the Jews and the Negroes and the foreigners--fought for their America, not for the America of the klans, and the kleagles, and the wizards, but for their own America; and in those heroic hours of the struggle these breeders of hate sought their holes like rats and were silent; in those wonderful hours, when this nation was lifted, as it were, out of itself to the very summit of liberalism and idealism; in those hours when the world was full of ^{the} promise of new revelations, these people were nowhere in sight.

But now that peace has been established through the labors and the sacrifices and the self-emulation of these undesirables, they come out of their holes and are now parading in gallant and heroic circumstance, breeding poison all round them.

A peculiar brand of conceit is manifested by this group. They do not like the Negro because they happen to be white; they do not like the Catholics because they

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happen to be Protestant; they do not like the Jew because they happen to be Gentile; they do not like the foreigner because they happen to be natives. The things that they are are true, fine, honorable and desirable; the things that others are are untrue, and false, and undesirable.

And back of it all is a peculiar Anglo-Saxon arrogance: America is for the Protestant Anglo-Saxon, and everyone else is an intruder, a foreigner, to be tolerated at times, and at times not to be tolerated. I have seen evidences of this kind of Anglo-Saxon arrogance in Egypt and in Canada. There are Englishmen in Canada who actually maintain that Canada is for the Protestant Anglo-Saxon, forgetting that when the English captured Canada from the French there was not an Englishman living in Canada. And it is equally true of Egypt. They make themselves so perfectly at home wherever they are.

I read an article this week which admirably illustrates this thought. It is called, "The Comedy of Americanization, which appeared in this week's Saturday Evening Post. In this article the writer, with nonchalance, declares that the entire policy and program of Americanization is fundamentally wrong; that you cannot Americanize foreigners because America is a race; it is not a political entity--it is not even a cultural entity; it is not a nation built up by the labors and the sacrifices of a hundred races, who have poured their blood of life, and the sweat of

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their brow, into this country. Why, it is a race, and it is the Anglo-Saxon race! And these others? Why, they are just here by accident! It might take a few hundred years until these others may be assimilated by this stalwart, heroic, magnificent type of Anglo-Saxon, but until such time, please do not call these foreigners Americans! That belongs to us; that is our name.

And blandly, without any qualm of conscience, the writer relegates history to the background and forgets that the very name America is not English at all; forgets the work of discovery and exploration of the Spaniards; the work of settlement of the French; the colonizing of the Dutch, the Swedes, the Germans and the Jews; and the labors of the Negroes, and the railroads that were built by the Slavs, and the mines that are now being dug by eastern Europeans. That is completely overlooked. What stands out beautifully and magnificently in the mind of this writer is what she calls "the Americans of the old rock"--whatever that means.

Now, I believe that this is impudence of the worst kind, and that sort of impudence is now being preached from pulpit and press; and it is time for these other millions, whose life blood has gone into the making of this spiritual experiment which we call America, to assert themselves. America is not a race, and it is not an experiment in racial unity; it is not Anglo-Saxon.

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America is an experiment in spiritual unity, in cultural unity, in political unity.

A thousand years from today, when most of these races will have had a chance to blend, to amalgamate and to merge into one another, some new type will be produced, perhaps--a new racial type which people then may designate American. But that racial type will no more be the Anglo-Saxon type of New England or other parts of the country, than it will be a unique Slavic type, or Teutonic type. But to call this one element out of a hundred that has gone into this composite of American life,--to call that American, to the exclusion and derogation of every other racial type, is a piece of impudence.

I cannot understand how Ford, whose father was a Scotch immigrant, whose son was a slacker, could be the ideal American, while a descendent of Hy ^{van} Soloman, who, during the darkest moments of the Revolutionary War, lent financial aid to the struggle; or the descendent of Philip ^{Minus}, who was the first white child born in Georgia (for Georgia was originally settled by Jews),--that their descendents are, somehow or other, intruders or foreigners here.

I will tell you who is a foreigner and who is an American. An American is one who, having caught the spirit of American life, the implications of the wonderful experiment that is transpiring upon these gracious shores,

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lives by that spirit and rears his children in the fine manhood and womanhood, with supreme devotion to American ideals of sympathy, and tolerance, and democracy, and brotherhood. He is an American--of the kin of Lincoln, even if his accent is thick.

And a foreigner is one who, although he may date back his lineage to some convict who was first settled down in South Carolina, or to some noble ancestry on the New England coast, is yet a cheap exploiter, a fanatic, a bigot in religion, in politics, a snob in his social relations; a narrow, shriveled, dried-up soul, who has not caught the broad spirit, the on-sweeping spirit of this great land. That man is a foreigner to his finger tips.

The Three K's are opposed to the Negro. That is a heritage--the bloody heritage of the South. Lincoln was a prophet when he said: "Fondly do we hope, reverently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away; yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsmen's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sworn, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'"

The race problem of the South is a problem which the South took unto itself, and which for two hundred and

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fifty years it perpetuated, and for which it will pay in the generations and in the centuries to come. History keeps remarkable accountings. Nothing wrong ever goes unrequited. The whites of the North and of the South paid with their precious blood for the sins perpetrated against the children of God; and for centuries to come that problem will harass and trouble and confuse the peoples of this country.

Our president spoke a magnificent and courageous word a few days ago in the South, when he called upon the peoples there to give unto the Negro those political and economic and educational opportunities to which he was entitled. That was a timely reminder and a timely answer to this vicious propaganda.

You cannot solve a problem like the Negro problem, of ten millions of living human beings who are today aspiring, educating themselves and clamoring for the elemental human rights; you cannot solve a problem like that by putting your head into a pillow case and boeing at them. It is perfectly stupid. A deliberate, intelligent program which will enable the two races to discover a working agreement is what is desired, and not a program of terrorism, which can be countered only by another terrorism.

They do not like the Catholics. Of course not; they are Protestants. But isn't it stupid! Think how

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near we are to Medievalism, when in this age people will claw and tear at one another because of theologic doctrines or dogmas; when there is so much to be done in this world; when there is so much that is un-Christian to be righted by true Christians; when there is so much of oppression, and suppression, and poverty, and abuse, and ignorance in the world; when there is so much need today in this tired and tortured world of ours for that old gospel of that gentle Jew of "Love, love, love!" We need it more than we need bread.

A movement is set on foot covertly, secretly, sinisterly, to turn brother against brother, and inspire all sorts of fears, suspicions and hates toward one another. The Catholic will not be terrified. A faith that can hold its millions in that superb way in which it holds; a faith that can gain the devotion and love and the spirit of sacrifice of its worshippers; a faith that can bring solace and comfort into the homes of millions, as the Catholic faith does, will not be terrified by any such foolish, childish playthings.

And as for the Jew, a people that has survived the, and the Crusades, and fifteen hundred years of steady persecution; a people that has survived the blind intolerance of kings, popes, princes and potentates; a people that is today surviving the greatest catastrophe which befell it in its entire history.--a people such as

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this will not be deflected one iota from its appointed destiny by any such make-up artists of the vaudeville variety. Strong and firm we stand today as of yore, determined to live by our faith, and die for our faith if need be. The light which guided our pilgrim fathers from the time of Chaldea to the present day is still upon us. And we face this all with perfect equanimity and fearlessness.

Perhaps Lincoln ought to speak the last word on this entire subject. Lincoln said: "I am not a no-Nothing, that is certain. How could I be? How can anyone who opposes the oppression of negroes be in favor of the degrading classes of white people? Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation we began by declaring that all men are created equal. We now practically read it: 'All men are created equal except negroes.' When the no-Nothings get control it will read: 'All men are created equal except negroes and foreigners and Catholics.' When it comes to this I shall prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of love and liberty--to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure and without the base alloy of hypocrisy."

That was the Russia of Lincoln's day. Russia today is very much different. And in Russia there is a very splendid way in effect of solving this problem. For

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every minister of hate, for every inciter of pogroms, for anyone who endeavors to begog the minds of the people from real issues, by filling their ears with false crys of conspiracies, the government of Russia at all times has a convenient back wall, and a blind-fold, and an excellent rifle. They kill them there. In our land we give them senatorial investigations.

This movement will die out in the course of time; its back has already been broken. But the spirit of it will revive from time to time; and it is, to my mind, the sacred and bounden duty of every lover of America to be constantly on the alert to defend with every ounce of his energy those rights which this nation has won by precious sacrifices.

It has been truly said that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. Let us remember that.

--o--

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J. I. Lipsitch

Office Franklin 546

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RABBI SILVER'S ENGAGEMENTS

Friday, Sept. 1

9 PM. Emanuel Sisterhood
1057 Steiner St.

Saturday, Sept. 2

10 AM. Temple Emanuel
(Rabbi Martin A. Meyer)

12- Lunch. Dr. Meyer
3:30 PM. Emanuel
Guild, 1337 Sutter St.
(Mrs. Henry Sahlein)

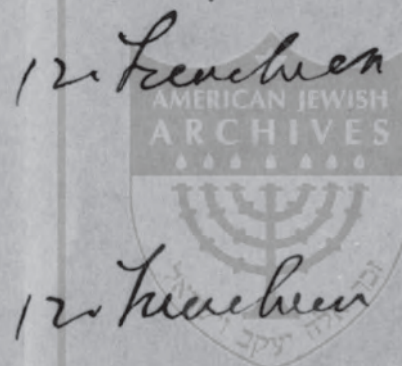
7 Dinner at Dr. Meyer's
House

Sunday, Sept. 3

Monday, Sept. 4
(LABOR DAY)

Tuesday, Sept. 5

Wednesday, Sept. 6



~~7 Dinner at Mrs. Keshland's
Home~~

7. *celebrating Herklaus*
8. *Theatre Party*

12- Emanuel Men's Club
Commercial Club
(Eugene S. Elkus
Melville Kaufmann)

8 PM. Mandate Jubilee
Temple Emanuel
(I. Irving Lipsitch)

8 PM. Leave for L.A.

1. The one achievement of war - as far as Jews are concerned

1. War may have bred wilder libinys to other peoples - but 10 years it has lost

2. Pogroms - extermination of Ukrainians, a whole race in the track again -

3. Crimes of Anti Sem - Herod. Rare chances in fate on open - Jew again scapegoat - ~~at~~ loaded with respons. for all murders, all unbr. crimes & stupidities

4. Even in our land. the one experiment in brother - the ugly thing has reversed it
World

① Anti - Jewish -

many welcomed when he preached

(2) Universities - our people & anti-
Jewish integrity - Test to lay
character in scholarship - but
rare -

2] ~~11~~ - The one achievement of War.
and not alone for years

(1) not eventual. But hardly
never begin as small barely
noticeable rivulets - in shape
& hit -

(2) The great dramas of hist.
take place in little arenas.

(3) Pal. gave 3 vol. to under,
a 1st to 2/3 of under. And a
3rd vol. to 1/2 the under

(3) And our race is not yet
men - half is not spiritual
& race, but mass.
~~from~~ 'prophecy' we
are yet to bless the world

(4) משה ויהושע ויהונתן
- משה ויהושע

Will

3] It is marvellously sweet ^{to} celebration
take part in such an occasion.
We have waited so long for it. Our
people has waited so long for it.

1. What a long uphill struggle
it has been - right down the ages.
- to turn back the hands of the
clock - to rebuild what has been
demolished - to perform the
miracle - of ^{from 7 days is} resurrection: a people
dead a long time -

2. Miracle has happened.
~~and our feet~~ I stand -

3. Further the spirit of our
beloved dead from all by
who said - Hallelu - Hallelu
remembered thing of Israel - who
like Moses saw - dead
would all the unhappy
dead - who lived once &
died humanly - faithful unto
the end - praying for rebuilding
of Jerusalem - I unite their spirit
of inspiration - They are with us

4. Triumph of a life. - dream.

(1) Inspiration to all idealists
and dreamers.

(2) In what was the laying for
you - but an impossible
imagination, well -

(3) But it absorbed all our
world - all the life, all the

(4) It became our real world.
and 19th. had to come
and go - before life became
real. -

(5) And I think that is the
- I think that is the
- I think that is the

(6) Laying in faith of a death.
less people. 1934 1935
- I think that is the

