

Showdown with KKK masons in Nashville

The Scottish Rite Freemasons and their Ku Klux Klan were recently directly challenged in the South, as has not happened in the century since the end of Reconstruction. A harrowing confrontation arose from a proposed resolution of the Nashville, Tennessee city council, calling on President Bill Clinton to take down the U.S. national monument that now honors Scottish Rite chief Albert Pike.

A Tuesday, Sept. 21 public hearing was scheduled for the topple-Pike resolution, which had been introduced by Nashville Metro councilman and civil rights leader "Kwame" Leo Lillard, Jr. Lillard invited Lyndon LaRouche associate and historian Anton Chaitkin down from Washington to testify at the council's Pike hearing.

On the Friday before the hearing, political science and black studies teachers Dr. A.J. Stovall and Dr. James Mock combined their classes at Austin Peay State University (Clarksville, Tennessee) and turned them over to Chaitkin to speak on the Scottish Rite and the Klan. Printed leaflets headlined "No KKK! Help Nashville Make History" went out to community organizations beginning Sunday, inviting citizens to actively participate in the hearings. Students and staff members at Fisk University, the historic black college which weathered Ku Klux Klan attacks after the Civil War, circulated the leaflet and announced the hearings on their radio station.

On Monday night, Nashville's black station WVOL aired an hour-long interview with Councilman Kwame Lillard, Chaitkin, and civil rights organizer Bernard Lewis. On Tuesday, shortly before the hearings, Chaitkin was interviewed on Nashville's powerful WLAC radio station.

Dozens of people on both sides of the issue jammed into a tiny, one-person office where the Nominations and Resolutions committee holds their seven-member meetings. Councilman Kwame Leo Lillard, Jr., presented historian Anton Chaitkin to speak for the resolution.

Chaitkin's prepared testimony was shouted down at several points and somewhat curtailed by a Klansman standing in the crowd of people that extended through the door and into the adjoining room: "Stop attacking the Klan—stick to the subject, Albert Pike."

James Turner, representing the Sons of the Confederate Veterans, then spoke for the Albert Pike side. The Sons have recently put up billboards on highways surrounding Nashville, promoting the Confederate "heritage." Turner told the council committee members, "This is the Lyndon

LaRouche organization. Lyndon LaRouche says that the Queen of England is the biggest drug pusher in the world."

He promised that the Pike statue would remain in Washington D.C. "forever." The Klansmen among the council committee members now turned on Anton Chaitkin. "Who paid your fare down here? . . . Are you associated with Lyndon LaRouche? . . . You have a problem with masons, don't you?" Chaitkin's responses evoked a clamor, which quieted somewhat when he emphasized, "The Scottish Rite are pagans, they are the ones who took prayer out of the schools."

The committee agreed that with the new evidence presented, and given the appearance for the first time ever of open community involvement on the issue, it must be considered at length and a full city council vote deferred for one month.

The activists left city hall in teams, taking care that they were not followed. Lillard then went inside for the regular full city council meeting, which would have voted on Albert Pike had the issue not been deferred. He left city hall at 11:00 p.m. Tuesday.

About an hour later, shortly after midnight, the councilman's 92 year-old father was assaulted, locked in his dwelling place and burned to death by an arsonist. Police say the killer was a deranged black man. Leo Lillard, Sr., was a universally loved, gentle man. As a Nashville civil rights pioneer, he had been burned out by arsonists in 1963, and his house had been destroyed by arsonists in 1988. His grandparents had been slaves in Texas, particularly famous for their courage in the face of slaveowner criminality.

Documentation

Below is a short excerpt from Chaitkin's testimony to the Nashville city council:

In 1905 the Neale Publishing Company of New York and Washington published *Ku Klux Klan: Its Origin, Growth and Disbandment*, written and edited by Walter L. Fleming, incorporating earlier material by J.C. Lester and D.L. Wilson.

Historian Walter Fleming's introduction to this 1905 book explains that he has been given "information in regard to Ku Klux Klan, by many former members of the order, and by their friends and relatives." Dr. Fleming states that "General Albert Pike, who stood high in the masonic order, was the chief judicial officer of the Klan." On a page of illustrations of important founders of the KKK, Dr. Fleming places Gen. Pike's portrait in the center, makes it larger than the six others on the page, and repeats this information as a caption: "General Albert Pike, chief judicial officer."

It is to be stressed that Walter Fleming's book was not a "slander" or "hatchet job" against Albert Pike, the well-

known freemason. . . . Fleming became the leading apologist for the KKK, and was the father of the modern historical line that Reconstruction was a corrupt oppression of the South. . . .

It was in Nashville that Albert Pike and other Confederate generals had met in 1867 to form a South-wide terrorist KKK, bringing cohesion and resources to the localized grouping born two years before in Pulaski, Tenn. The organization he formed in Nashville designated Pike its chief judiciary officer, and its Grand Dragon for Arkansas.

In the KKK birth-state of Tennessee, Pike was the president of the Bar Association and publisher of an outspoken racist newspaper.

But it was as the Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite, and the recognized boss of the southern white masonic order, that Pike exercised the great clandestine power that welded the KKK together. . . .

This masonic information is taken from *Tennessee Templars: A Register of Names with Biographical Sketches of the Knights Templar of Tennessee* by James D. Richardson. This James D. Richardson was himself the Commandant of Knights Templar and grand master of masons in Tennessee, and was Speaker of the Tennessee House of Representatives during the era of the Klan terror.

This same James D. Richardson was Albert Pike's successor as Commander of the southern Scottish Rite masons. It was this same Richardson who ordered the Pike statue to be erected in Washington D.C. It was Richardson who, as a U.S. Congressman from Tennessee, introduced into the U.S. House of Representatives the infamous 1898 resolution: It called for the federal government to provide federal land to Pike's masonic organization, on which to put up their statue honoring the master strategist of KKK terror.

Why the statue must fall

Susan Lawrence Davis's 1924 *Authentic History, Ku Klux Klan, 1865-1877*, and Stanley F. Horn's 1939 *Invisible Empire: The Story of the Ku Klux Klan 1866-1871* (reprinted 1968), repeat the pattern Fleming created in 1905, revealing Pike's KKK role but treating him and the Klan sympathetically. . . .

The same is true of numerous published biographies of Albert Pike: Pike's role as Klan leader or KKK boss of Arkansas is discussed, but treated as if KKK terrorist murder of African-Americans was "regrettable" but "only natural" and "understandable."

The sole exceptions are those works produced or published directly by Pike's own southern white Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, which simply do not mention the Ku Klux Klan.

Thus, the demand that the statue honoring Albert Pike be removed from the nation's capital, does not rest on any new arguments about the Klan leader's identity. It is rather a demand that such an enemy of humanity *not be honored* by

our nation.

Influential members of the community of historians claim that the murders, tortures and oppressions of the Ku Klux Klan were not "criminal"—they were only a natural response to the alleged disorderliness of the negroes! If this point of view prevails, KKK-style revenge measures (only beginning with the death penalty) would be falsely justified as the will of racist mobs, when economic depression and drugged demoralization beset the poorest sections of our cities.

The Klan, revived

In 1915, a new Ku Klux Klan was created in Georgia and quickly spread throughout the United States. The new KKK was launched with a public relations gimmick—the D.W. Griffith movie, "Birth of a Nation." This lying propaganda piece for the new Klan, justifying the old Klan's terroristic war against humanity and against our nation, was shown in theaters across the country despite protests from the NAACP.

The movie was based on the work of Dr. Walter Fleming and others, who wanted to make the Ku Klux Klan's view of history popularly accepted. The movie, for example, falsely depicts the black legislators of South Carolina after the Civil War as a bunch of drunken lechers. In real life, the predominantly black regimes in South Carolina and some other states began to put through measures of industrial and agricultural development which would have saved the south from a further century of backwardness.

But Albert Pike's white supremacists overturned these regimes with murder and riot. From Texas to the Atlantic, Pike's organization assassinated loyal Americans. They tortured and murdered thousands of black people who asserted their God-given rights, their human rights, the rights which black and white soldiers had secured in the Civil War.

Washington represents the south

KKK propaganda shows itself as representing the loyal people of the South. But the greatest political leader of the South was the first President of the United States, George Washington. Though he inherited a slave plantation, he rejected the British Empire heritage of backwardness. Washington devoted his life and steered his countrymen toward building a unified nation with modern industry and agriculture, not the tragic ignorance and brutality of the plantation system. His farewell address was an eloquent warning to the people of the South, not to listen to demagogues who would split up our country with secession. Secession would only serve Great Britain's design of reconquering America, with Britain's classical divide and rule strategy.

In light of the great moral victory represented by the Mideast peace agreement, the time has come for our country to bring black and white together. Let us go back to George Washington's view of what the South should be, what our country should be, and reject the KKK or British view of the matter.