

THE TWENTIES IN POLITICAL CARTOONS

Sixteen political cartoons on the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s appear on the following pages. They were published between 1921 and 1928 in general circulation (white-owned) and African American newspapers, and in publications that supported the Klan.

To analyze a political cartoon, consider its:

- ❑ **CONTENT.** First, basically describe what is drawn in the cartoon (without referring to the labels). What is depicted? What is happening?
- ❑ **CONTEXT.** Consider the timing. What is happening in national events at the time of the cartoon? Check the date: what occurred in the days and weeks before the cartoon appeared?
- ❑ **LABELS.** Read each label; look for labels that are not apparent at first, and for other written content in the cartoon.
- ❑ **SYMBOLS.** Name the symbols in the cartoons. What do they mean? How do they convey the cartoon's meaning?
- ❑ **TITLE.** Study the title. Is it a statement, question, exclamation? Does it employ a well-known phrase, e.g., slang, song lyric, movie title, radio show, political or product slogan? How does it encapsulate and enhance the cartoonist's point?
- ❑ **TONE.** Identify the tone of the cartoon. Is it satirical, comic, tragic, ironic, condemning, quizzical, imploring? What adjective describes the feeling of the cartoon? How do the visual elements in the drawing align with its tone?
- ❑ **POINT.** Put it all together. What is the cartoonist's point?

QUESTIONS

- ❑ How is the Klan portrayed differently in the pro- and anti-Klan cartoons? in the general circulation and the African American newspapers?
- ❑ Which symbols are used most effectively in the cartoons? What makes them effective?
- ❑ Which cartoon would you select as the most successful in delivering its point? Why?

The KLAN



"The Answer"
 The [Philadelphia] Public Ledger, ca. Oct. 1921



"One Must Be Extinguished"
 The Chicago Defender, March 31, 1923

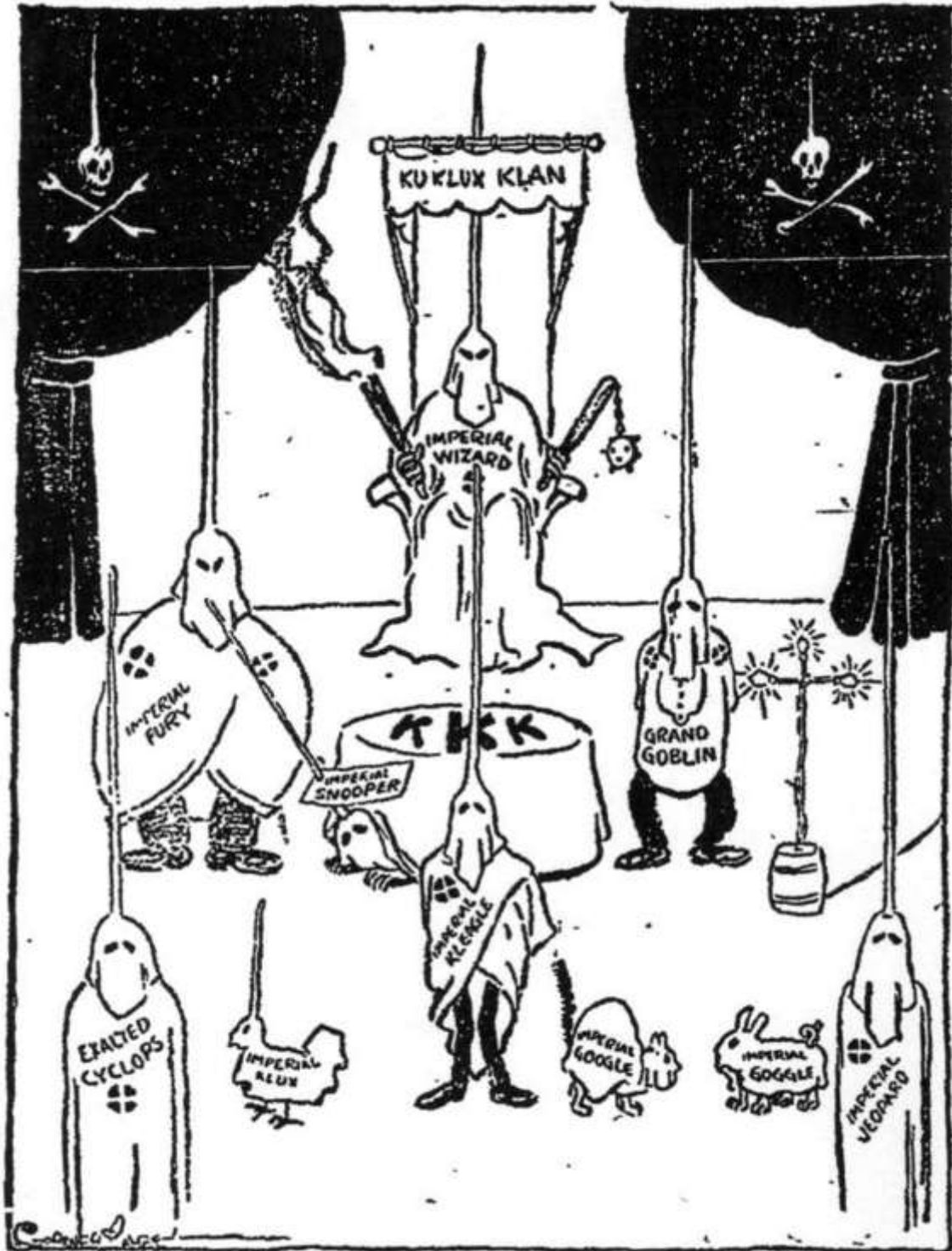


“The Answer”

Public Ledger, Philadelphia [n.d.]
as reprinted in the *Los Angeles Times*, October. 9, 1921
Cartoonist: Charles Henry “Bill” Sykes

The Klansman carries a whip and a bucket of tar labeled “Terrorism” (to tar-and-feather victims).

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"The Auxiliary Government"

The Courier-Journal, Louisville, Kentucky [n.d.]
as reprinted in the *Los Angeles Times*, October 16, 1921

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“That Missing Sheet and Pillowcase Have Turned Up!”

Los Angeles Times, June 9, 1922

Cartoonist: Edmund Gale

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“Their Christmas Tree”

Judge, Dec. 16, 1922

as reprinted in *The Afro-American*, Baltimore, Dec. 29, 1922

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Untitled

The Afro-American, Baltimore, February 23, 1923

African American newspaper. Cartoonist: Watson Studio.

The depiction satirizes the prevalent racist portrayal of the "negro brute" as a lurking threat to white "American womanhood."

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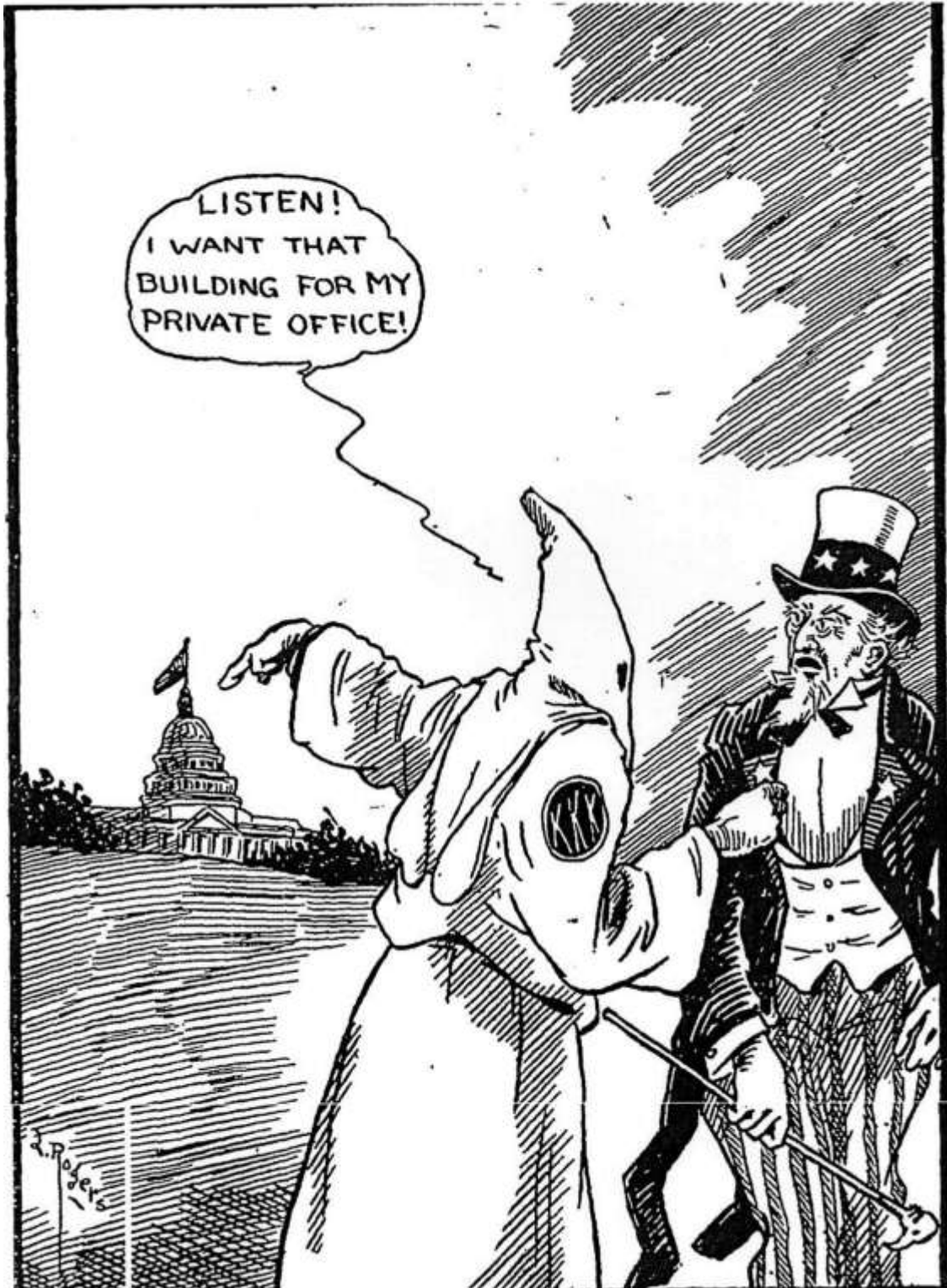


“One Must Be Extinguished”

The Chicago Defender, March 31, 1923

African American newspaper. Cartoonist: Leslie Rogers.

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“Sooner or Later”

The Chicago Defender, September 22, 1923

African American newspaper. Cartoonist: Leslie Rogers.

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“This Is Going to Be Good!”

Los Angeles Times, June 24, 1924

Cartoonist: Edmund Gale

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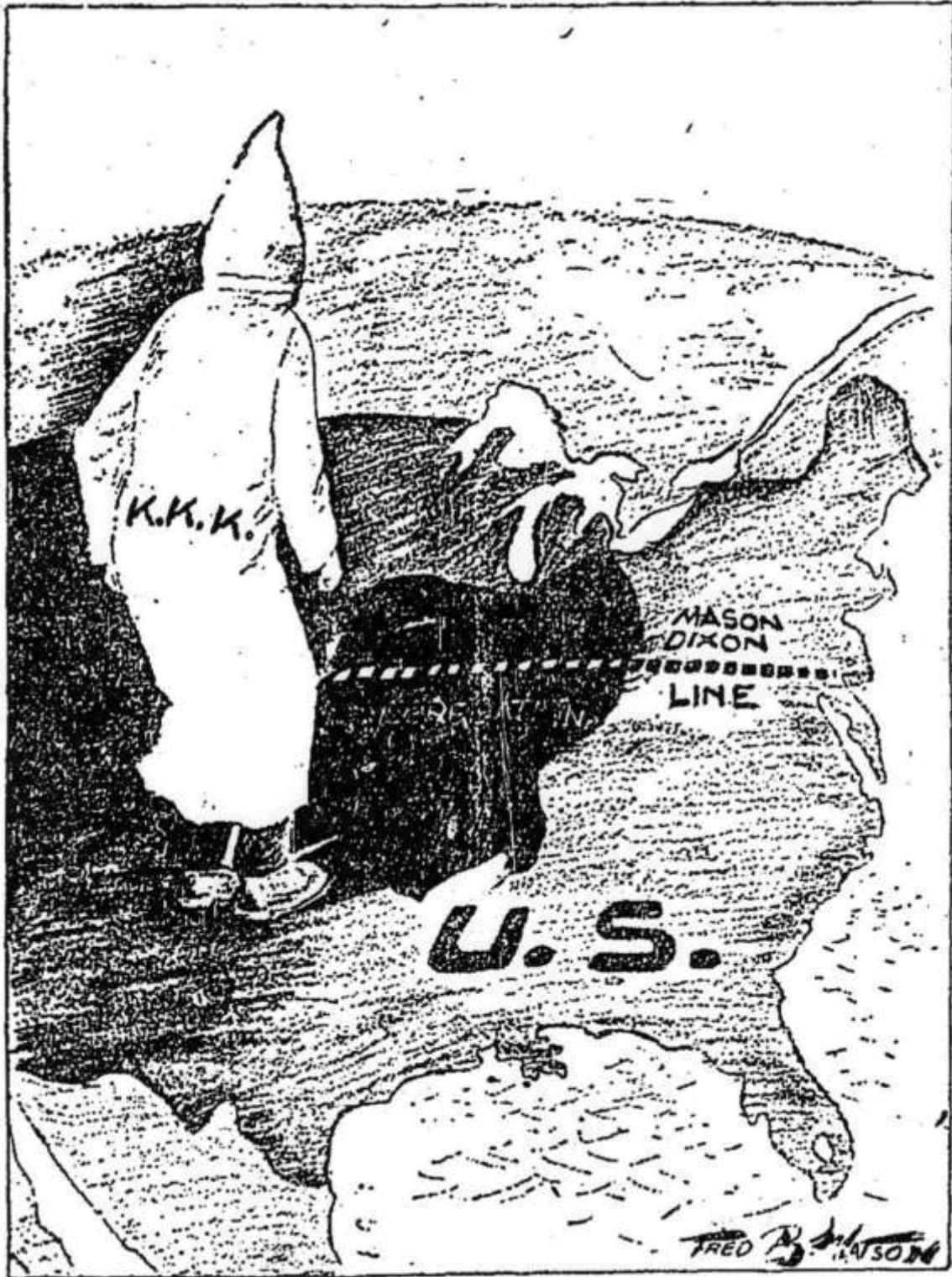
"On the Fence"

The Atlanta Constitution, August 31, 1924

Cartoonist: Lewis Crumley Gregg

John W. Davis: Democratic candidate for president in 1924, running against the incumbent president Calvin Coolidge.

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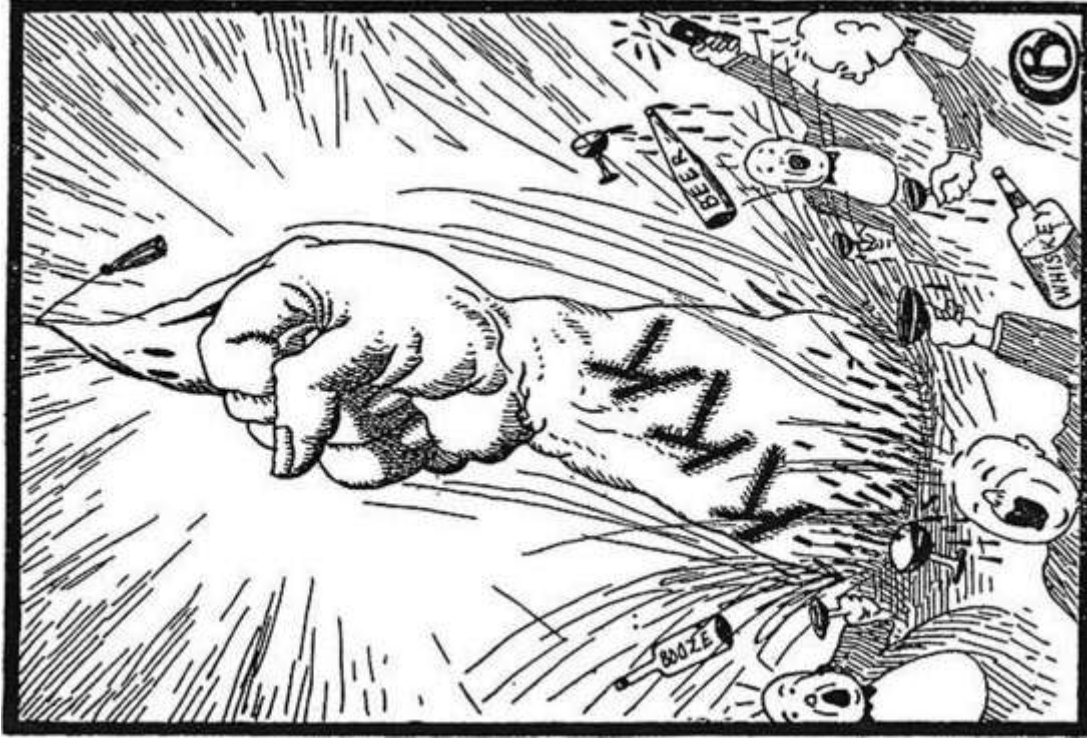


“The Creeping Shadow”

The Afro-American, Baltimore, October 3, 1925

African American newspaper. Cartoonist: Fred B. Watson

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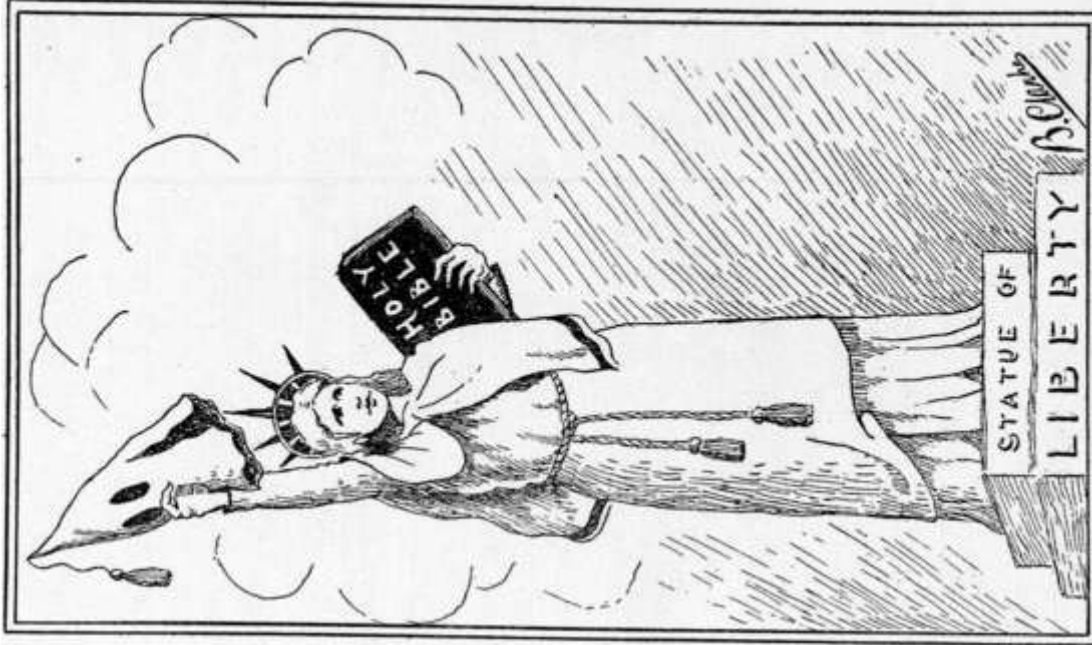
“The Defender of the 18th Amendment”



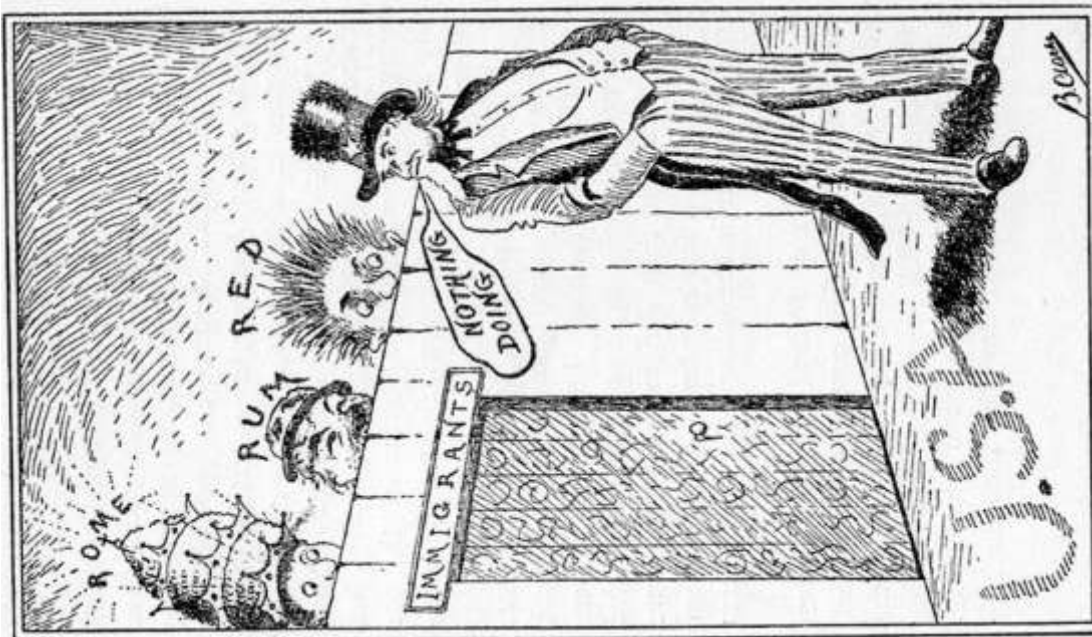
“Uncle Sam: ‘We Don’t Need You in the U.S.’”

Illustrations by Rev. Branford Clarke in *Klansmen: Guardians of Liberty*, 1926, by Bishop Alma White, founder of the Pillar of Fire Church in Denver, Colorado, which promoted the Klan's positions in support of Prohibition and against Catholic (“Rome”) political influence.

Pillar of Fire International, Zarephath, New Jersey; permission request in process.



“Liberty Found under the Hood of the K.K.K.”



“Not Wanted”

Illustrations by Rev. Branford Clarke in *Heroes of the Fiery Cross*, 1928, by Bishop Alma White, founder of the Pillar of Fire Church in Denver, Colorado, which promoted the Klan's opposition to Catholic ("Rome" and "Rum"), Jewish, and immigrant ("Red") influences in American politics and culture.



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“Of All the Wrongs You’ve Done to Me”

The Pittsburgh Courier, March 12, 1927

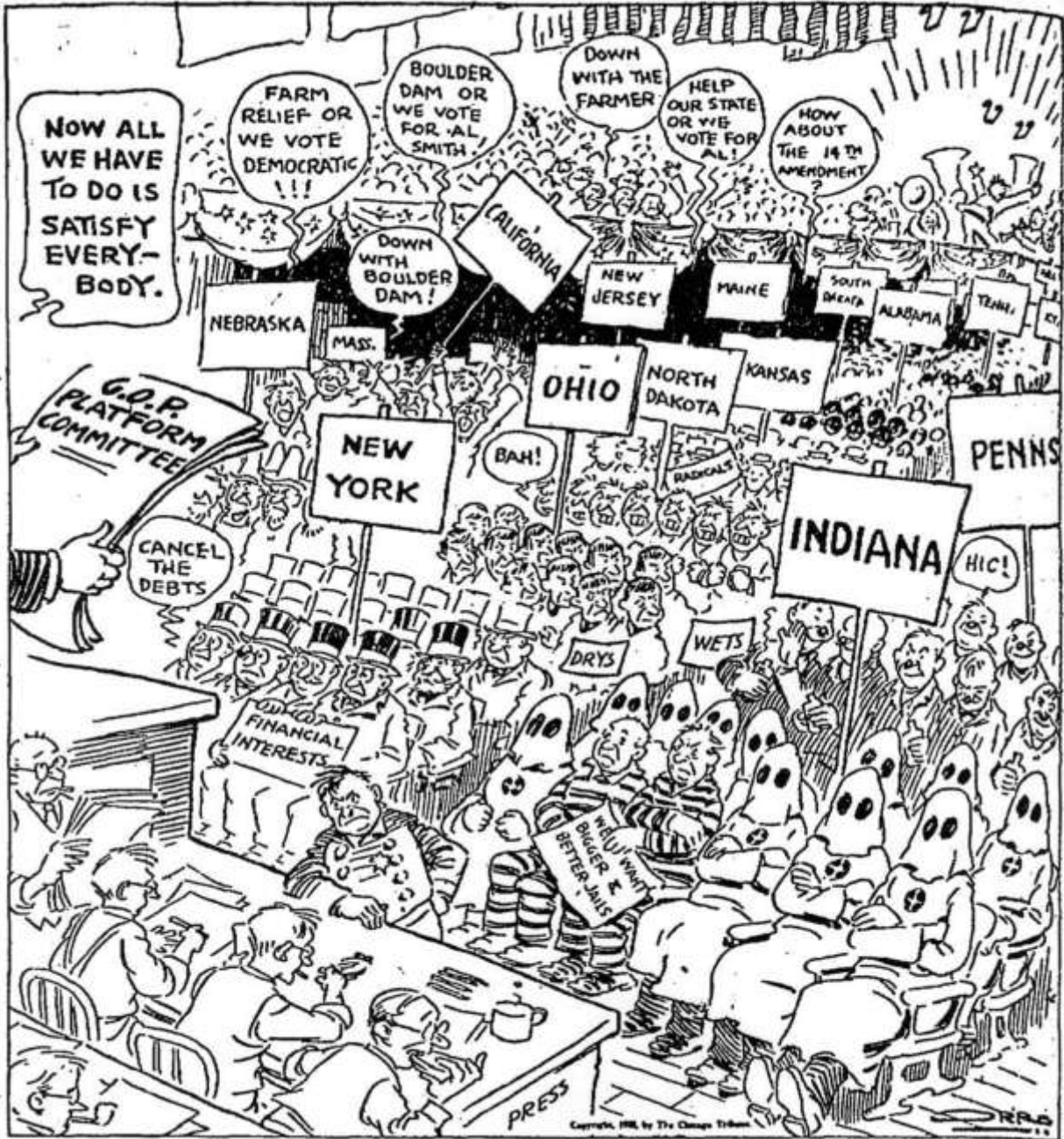
African American newspaper. Cartoonist: Wilbert Holloway.

“Of All the Wrongs You’ve Done to Me” was a popular jazz band number with the lines: “Of all the wrongs you’ve done to me / They’re bound to come back to you.”

Sign at upper right: “To Oblivion.”

Signs at left: “Supreme Court rules against Klan.” “Kansas outlaws Klan. North Carolina outlaws Klan.”

In late February 1927, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal from Kansas Klan members to overturn the state supreme court’s decision upholding the governor’s ouster of the Klan from the state.



“The G. O. P. Convention”

Chicago Daily Tribune, June 13, 1928

Cartoonist: Carey Orr

G.O.P.: Republican Party (“Grand Old Party”).

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