Linda Gordon. *The Second Coming of the KKK: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the American Political Tradition.* New York: Liveright, 2017. Pp. 228. Hardcover $27.95.

Linda Gordon, Professor of History and Humanities at New York University, is an author of multiple award-winning books about American social and political history, as well as women's issues. Alarmed by a recent rise in nationalism and nativism in the country, she focuses her lens toward the second-era Ku Klux Klan (KKK) of the 1920s. Though short-lived, this new organization was a highly successful, nation-wide social movement that characterized the darker side of the Progressive-era, rallying thousands (if not millions) of ordinary citizens, politicians, and sympathizers with its nativist, fear mongering, agenda of a white supremacist "100% Americanism." Gordon asserts we must study the KKK of the 1920s if we are to gain a "full and honest accounting of all our past, especially when it continues to shape our present" (xi).

Revived in 1915 by "Colonel" William J. Simmons, the new Ku Klux Klan took its inspiration from the original KKK of the Postbellum American South and the cinematic blockbuster, *Birth of a Nation*. It was the product of long-held American prejudices against immigrants, ethnic and religious minorities, the economically and socially rich network of popular fraternal societies, and the moral reform movements of the era, particularly Prohibition. They created a media-savvy public relations department, which exploited social unease while propagating their agenda, with its traditionally-ordered gender roles, white supremacy, virulent evangelical Protestantism, and propensity for vigilantism and violence. Fears of a changing American demographic following World War I found a militant champion with the new Klan, unleashing the organization beyond the confines of the rural South. Southern Californians may even be surprised at the mention of Klan activity in familiar communities such as Anaheim.

The book begins with the Klan's rebirth, organizational structure, recruitment tactics, and its religious influence. It also discusses the Klan's concept of masculinity, growing political influence, and finally closes with its legacy – particularly in light

of the upsurge in nativism during and after the 2016 presidential race. In support of this, Gordon provides analysis on the Klan's overlap with later racists and nativists, such as the diverse fascist movements of pre-World War II Europe, as well as their modern iterations within the U.S. Of particular note is the chapter on "KKK Feminism," which concerns the Women's Ku Klux Klan––one of the most empowered and active of the fraternal or social organizations available to women at that time. Fraternal orders were an extremely popular and influential component of civil society, promising social prestige and contacts, cemented with a sense of ritualized mystery and romantic lore. For the thousands of members joining the Klan, they were promised much more than a fraternity would normally provide: they were joining a powerful nation-wide social movement. While not authoritative, the overview of the Klan's fraternal influences is compelling as it is a seldom explored topic. Thus, the detailed description of the initiation ritual is certain to peak interest.

Gordon weaves a compelling and easy-to-read narrative. However, a critical drawback is her lack of primary source material, aside from a small collection of photographs depicting Klan-sponsored events, examples of their material culture, and a few cartoons. Instead, Gordon relies on the work of Klan scholars such as Kenneth T. Jackson and Wyn Craig Wade, as well as recent studies by Dr. Kristofer Allerfeldt and others. For those who are familiar with the history of the KKK, this book may seem derivative, despite its promise of drawing parallels to current events. Nevertheless, it never succumbs to sensationalism, and remains somber and intelligent. Intended for a popular audience, this work will serve as a contemporary introduction to one of the darker chapters in a not-too-distant past.

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