

# Going to the Source

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# The Source: Testimony and Reports from the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States

All of the testimony that follows is taken from the Joint Select Committee's investigation of the Ku Klux Klan in South Carolina. Sources 1 and 2 come from testimony heard in Washington, D.C., while Sources 3, 4, and 5 are from testimony heard in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Sources 6 and 7 are excerpts from the committee's majority and minority reports, which were completed after the investigation was over.

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## *Testimony of Samuel T. Poinier,* Washington, D.C., June 7, 1871

Poinier was a Republican newspaper editor and a federal tax collector in South Carolina at the time of his testimony.

Samuel T. Poinier sworn and examined.

By the Chairman:<sup>1</sup>

*Question:* Please state in what part of South Carolina you reside.

*Answer:* In Spartanburg County, the most northern county in the State.

*Question:* How long have you resided there?

*Answer:* Since February, 1866; a little over five years.

*Question:* From what part of the United States did you go to South Carolina?

*Answer:* I went there from Louisville, Kentucky. . . . I went there in 1866 with no intention whatever of remaining. I went entirely for social reasons, to marry, and I was persuaded to stay there. My wife was a native of Charleston, and I found her up in Spartanburg after the war, where a large number of Charleston people went during the bombardment of the city. . . .

*Question:* Were you in the Union Army?

*Answer:* Yes, sir: I went out from Kentucky.

*Question:* Proceed with your statement.

<sup>1</sup> Republican senator John Scott from Pennsylvania.

*Source:* United States Congress, *Report of the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States*, vol. 2, *South Carolina, Part I* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1872), 25–28, 33–34.

*Answer:* Just before our last campaign,<sup>2</sup> it was May a year ago, I . . . identified myself publicly with the republican party. I made my paper a republican paper. I did everything I could in the last State election for the reelection of Governor Scott<sup>3</sup> and our other State officers. From that time I have been in very deep water. . . . I was ordered away last fall, immediately after our last election, in November. It was soon after the first appearance of this Ku-Klux organization, or whatever it is. Soon after these outrages occurred in our county I received a note ordering me away from there, stating that I must leave the county; that all the soldiers of the United States Army could not enable me to live in Spartanburg. . . . two days prior to our election, a party of disguised men went, at night, and took out two white men and three negroes, one of them a colored woman, and whipped them most brutally. Two of them were managers of the box<sup>4</sup> at that election; and the men told them that if they dared to hold an election at that box they would return and kill them. That was the first appearance of any trouble in the State. . . .

*Question:* Were those people of whom you spoke in disguise?

*Answer:* They were all in disguise. One of the colored men who were whipped swore positively as to the identity of some of them, and the parties were arrested, but nothing could ever be done with them; they proved an *alibi*, and some of them have since gone to Texas. . . .

*Question:* Go on and state any similar occurrences in that county since that time . . .

*Answer:* Since that time outrages of that nature have occurred every week. Parties of disguised men have ridden through the county almost nightly. They go to a colored man's house, take him out and whip him. They tell him that he must not give any information that he has been whipped. They tell him, moreover, that he must make a public renunciation of his republican principles or they will return and kill him. . . .

*Question:* Do the facts that have transpired and the manner in which they have occurred satisfy you of the existence of the organization in that portion of South Carolina?

*Answer:* Yes, sir; I have no doubt of it in the world. I have received anonymous communications signed by the order of "K.K.K.," directing me to leave the county, stating that I could not live there; that I was a carpet-bagger. But personally I have never met with any trouble.

By Mr. Van Trump:<sup>5</sup>

*Question:* You have a connection with the partisan press there?

*Answer:* Yes, sir. I am editing a republican paper.

*Question:* Do you advocate the cause of the negro in your paper?

<sup>2</sup> The election of 1870.

<sup>3</sup> Robert K. Scott was the Republican governor of South Carolina.

<sup>4</sup> Ballot box.

<sup>5</sup> Democratic representative Philadelph Van Trump from Ohio.

*Answer:* Not the negro especially. I advocate the general principles of republicanism.

*Question:* You support the whole republican doctrine in your paper?

*Answer:* So far as general principles go, I do. I do not approve or uphold the State government in many of its acts; but, so far as the general principles of republicanism are concerned, I uphold it very strongly. I advocate the right of the colored people to vote and to exercise their civil and political privileges. . . .

*Question:* These men who assert that their object is to put down the negro and get possession of the Government are prominent men, are they not?

*Answer:* Yes, sir.

*Question:* Can you name a single man?

*Answer:* Well, I cannot name anybody specially who has made such a remark, but I hear it in the hotels.

*Question:* Have you yourself heard them make the remark?

*Answer:* I have heard the remark made; it is a common thing.

*Question:* Is it not rather an uncommon remark?

*Answer:* It is not, there.

*Question:* You cannot recollect the name of a single person who has made that declaration?

*Answer:* No sir, I cannot recall any now.

## 2

### ***Testimony of D. H. Chamberlain, Washington, D.C., June 10, 1871***

Chamberlain was a Republican and the attorney general of South Carolina.

D. H. Chamberlain, sworn and examined.

By the Chairman:

*Question:* How long have you been a resident of the State?

*Answer:* I have been a resident there since December, 1865.

*Question:* Please go on and state to the committee the knowledge you have acquired, from your official position, as to the efficiency with which the laws are executed throughout the State of South Carolina, and the protection afforded to life and property in the State. Make your statement in general terms.

*Answer:* The enforcement of the law has, from time to time, been very much interrupted and disturbed from special causes; lately by what are popularly known as Ku-Klux operations. There have been a great many outrages committed, and a great many homicides, and a great many whippings. I speak

*Source:* Report of the Joint Select Committee, vol. 2, South Carolina, Part I, 48-51.

now, of course, of what I have heard; I have never seen any outrages committed myself; I am simply stating what I believe to be fact. . . .

*Question:* In what part of the State are these offenses committed which you attribute to the influence of this organization?

*Answer:* Notably in Spartanburg, Newberry, Union, and York Counties; those are the principal counties that have been the scenes of these disturbances. But they have extended into Laurens, Chester, and Lancaster Counties.<sup>1</sup> . . .

*Question:* Have there been any convictions for these offenses in the State, so far as your information goes; offenses committed by these organized bands?

*Answer:* No sir, no convictions, and no arrests, except in the case of this wounded Ku-Klux.<sup>2</sup> . . .

By Mr. Van Trump:

*Question:* You say you went to South Carolina in 1865?

*Answer:* Yes, sir.

*Question:* How long after the termination of the war; what part of the year?

*Answer:* I went in December, 1865.

*Question:* From where did you go?

*Answer:* From Massachusetts. I had been in the Union army during the war. I settled at Charleston in December, 1865, and remained there, and my residence is there now, although I have to be at the capital of the State most of the time.

By Mr. Stevenson:<sup>3</sup>

*Question:* When did it first come to your knowledge that this organization existed in the State of South Carolina?

*Answer:* It would be difficult to say. My conviction that there is such an organization has grown up very gradually. . . . I cannot fix the date exactly.

*Question:* Had you any knowledge of the fact that there were acts of violence and disorders in that State about the time of the election in 1868?

*Answer:* Yes, sir.

*Question:* Had you any information of the sending of arms at that time into that State?

*Answer:* O, I remember that a great many arms were purchased by private individuals, if you refer to that. I know that at the time, during the canvass,<sup>4</sup> there was considerable excitement when it was understood that the democrats,

<sup>1</sup> All seven of these counties were in the piedmont or up-country region of South Carolina, where the black and white populations were roughly equal.

<sup>2</sup> Chamberlain is referring to a Klansman wounded during a raid on the Newberry County Courthouse. He was jailed and then released on bail and subsequently either died while in the care of a friend or was spirited away by friends to avoid prosecution.

<sup>3</sup> Republican representative Job Stevenson from Ohio.

<sup>4</sup> Campaigning for votes.

as we call them, were arming themselves with Winchester and Henry rifles, or something of the kind.

*Question:* Repeating rifles?

*Answer:* Yes, sir. . . .

By Mr. Blair:<sup>5</sup>

*Question:* Did you have any actual knowledge of the fact that the democrats were then arming?

*Answer:* No, sir.

*Question:* Then you make this statement as a rumor merely?

*Answer:* Well, yes, sir; I should use, perhaps, a little stronger term than rumor. I had heard it so often that it came to be a belief with me, but it was hearsay. . . .

*Question:* Was it a common report that those arms all went into the hands of democrats?

*Answer:* As I heard it, it was understood that those arms were imported into the State upon order of individuals. I do not know but a republican might have had his order filled, but the belief was that they were generally ordered by democrats.

By Mr. Stevenson:

*Question:* You have no knowledge of any general arming among the republicans at that time?

*Answer:* No, sir.

*Question:* You were a republican, then, were you not?

*Answer:* Yes, sir.

By Mr. Blair:

*Question:* Did not the republicans have arms?

*Answer:* O, yes.

By Mr. Van Trump:

*Question:* Did not the negroes have arms?

*Answer:* Yes, sir; it is very common for people to have their shot-guns, to have some kind of arms. I suppose that in this instance people thought that there was an unusually large number brought in at a particular time, and that they were not for sporting purposes. They were repeating rifles.

*Question:* Have you been a politician for any part of your life?

*Answer:* No, sir; I do not think I have ever been a politician.

*Question:* Have you never heard a thousand rumors during an election that had no foundation in fact?

*Answer:* Yes, sir; many of them.

*Question:* Got up for excitement merely?

*Answer:* Yes, sir.

<sup>5</sup> Democratic senator Frank Blair from Michigan.

## 3

**Testimony of Elias Thomson,  
Spartanburg, South Carolina, July 7, 1871**

Elias Thomson (colored) sworn and examined.

By the Chairman:

*Question:* Where do you live?

*Answer:* Up on Tiger River, on Mrs. Vernon's plantation.<sup>1</sup>

*Question:* What do you follow?

*Answer:* Farming.

*Question:* Do you live on rented land?

*Answer:* Yes, sir.

*Question:* How much have you rented?

*Answer:* I think about fifty acres.

*Question:* How long have you been living there?

*Answer:* Ever since the surrender; I never left home.

*Question:* Have you ever been disturbed any up there?

*Answer:* Yes, sir.

*Question:* How?

*Answer:* There came a parcel of gentlemen to my house one night—or men. They went up to the door and ran against it. My wife was sick. I was lying on a pallet, with my feet to the door. They ran against it and hallooed to me, "Open the door, quick, quick, quick." I threw the door open immediately, right wide open. Two little children were lying with me. I said, "Come in gentlemen." One of them says, "Do we look like gentlemen?" I says, "You look like men of some description; walk in." One says, "Come out here; are you ready to die?" I told him I was not prepared to die. "Well," said he, "Your time is short; commence praying." I told him I was not a praying man much, and hardly ever prayed; only a very few times; never did pray much. He says, "You ought to pray; your time is short, and now commence to pray." I told him I was not a praying man. One of them held a pistol to my head and said, "Get down and pray." I was on the steps, with one foot on the ground. They led me off to a pine tree. There was three or four of them behind me, it appeared, and one on each side, and one in front. The gentleman who questioned me was the only one I could see. All the time I could not see the others. Every time I could get a look around, they would touch me on the side of the head with a pistol, so I had to keep my head square in front. The next question was, "Who did you vote for?" I told him I voted for Mr. Turner—Claudius Turner, a gentleman in the neighborhood. They said, "What did you vote for him for?" I said, "I thought a good deal of him; he was my neighbor." I told them I disremembered who was on the ticket besides, but they had several, and I voted the ticket. "What did you do that for?" they said. Says I, "because I thought it was right."

<sup>1</sup> The Vernons were Thomson's former masters.

Source: *Report of the Joint Select Committee*, vol. 2, *South Carolina, Part I*, 410–15.

They said, "You thought it was right? It was right wrong." I said, "I never do anything hardly if I think it is wrong; if it was wrong, I did not know it. That was my opinion at the time and I thought every man ought to vote according to his notions." He said, "If you had taken the advice of your friends you would have been better off." I told him I had. Says I, "You may be a friend to me, but I can't tell who you are." Says he, "Can't you recognize anybody here?" I told him I could not. "In the condition you are in now, I can't tell who you are." One of them had a very large set of teeth; I suppose they were three-quarters of an inch long; they came right straight down. He came up to me and sort of nodded. He had on speckled horns and calico stuff, and had a face on. He said, "Have you got a chisel here I could get?" I told him I hadn't, but I reckoned I could knock one out, and I sort of laughed. He said, "What in hell are you laughing at? It is no laughing time." I told him it sort of tickled me, and I thought I would laugh. I did not say anything then for a good while. "Old man," says one, "have you got a rope here, or a plow-line, or something of the sort?" I told him, "Yes; I had one hanging on the crib." He said, "Let us have it." One of them says, "String him up to this pine tree, and we will get all out of him. Get up, one of you, and let us pull him up, and he will tell the truth." I says, "I can't tell you anything more than I have told. There is nothing that I can tell you but what I have told you and you have asked me." One man questioned me all this time. One would come up and say, "Let's hang him a while, and he will tell us the truth"; and another then came up and said, "Old man, we are just from hell; some of us have been dead ever since the revolutionary war." . . . I was not scared, and said, "You have been through a right smart experience." "Yes," he says, "we have been through a considerable experience." One of them says, "we have just come from hell." I said, "If I had been there, I would not want to go back." . . . Then they hit me thirteen of the hardest cuts I ever got. I never had such cuts. They hit me right around my waist and by my hip, and cut a piece about as wide as my two fingers in one place. I did not say a word while they were whipping, only sort of grunted a little. As quick as they got through they said, "Go to your bed. We will have this country right before we get through; go to your bed," and they started away. . . .

*Question:* Who is Claudius Turner?

*Answer:* He is a gentleman that run for the legislature here. He was on the ticket with Mr. Scott.

*Question:* The republican ticket?

*Answer:* Yes, sir; the radical<sup>2</sup> ticket. . . .

By Mr. Van Trump:

*Question:* Explain to me, if you can, if the object of this Ku-Klux organization is to intimidate the colored people, why they were so particular as to make you promise, under penalty of death, that you would never disclose the fact that you had been visited; do you understand why that is?

<sup>2</sup> Radical Republicans were known for their support of black suffrage and the disenfranchisement of former Confederate military and civilian officers.

*Answer:* I can explain this fact this far: You know when they said to me to not say anything about this matter, I asked them what I must say, and when I asked, "What must I say? I will have to say something," they said, "What are you going to say?" I said, "What must I say?" He said, "Are you going to tell it?" I told them, "I have to say something, of course, and what must I say; what can I say?" Then they said, looking straight at me—

*Question:* Why is it that so often in giving your testimony you have to get up and make gesticulations like an orator? Have you been an orator?

*Answer:* No, sir, but I was showing the way they did me, and what they said to me. They said, "You just let me hear of this thing again, and we will not leave a piece of you when we come back."

*Question:* To whom have you talked lately about this case, or consulted here in town?

*Answer:* I have not consulted much about it.

*Question:* How long have you been waiting to be examined?

*Answer:* Since Tuesday about 10 o'clock.

*Question:* Have any white republicans been to see you?

*Answer:* No, sir; nobody at all.

*Question:* Did you see them?

*Answer:* I don't know who the republicans are here. I may have seen some.

*Question:* Do you pretend to say that since Tuesday you have not talked with any white about your case?

*Answer:* With none about the Ku-Klux matter.

#### 4

### *Testimony of Lucy McMillan, Spartanburg, South Carolina, July 10, 1871*

Lucy McMillan (colored) sworn and examined.

By the Chairman:

*Question:* Where do you live?

*Answer:* Up in the country. I live on McMillan's place, right at the foot of the road.

*Question:* How far is it?

*Answer:* Twelve miles.

*Question:* Are you married?

*Answer:* I am not married. I am single now. I was married. My husband was taken away from me and carried off twelve years ago.

*Question:* He was carried off before the war?

*Answer:* Yes, sir; the year before the war; twelve years ago this November coming.

*Source:* Report of the Joint Select Committee, vol. 3, South Carolina, Part 2, 604-7.

*Question:* How old are you now?

*Answer:* I am called forty-six. I am forty-five or six.

*Question:* Did the Ku-Klux come where you live at any time?

*Answer:* They came there once before they burned my house down. The way it happened was this: John Hunter's wife came to my house on Saturday morning, and told they were going to whip me. I was afraid of them; there was so much talk of Ku-Klux drowning people, and whipping people, and killing them. My house was only a little piece from the river, so I laid out at night in the woods. The Sunday evening after Isham McCrary<sup>1</sup> was whipped I went up, and a white man, John McMillan, came along and says to me, "Lucy, you had better stay at home, for they will whip you anyhow." I said if they have to, they might whip me in the woods, for I am afraid to stay there. Monday night they came in and burned my house down; I dodged out alongside of the road not far off and saw them. I was sitting right not far off, and as they came along the river I knew some of them. I knew John McMillan, and Kennedy McMillan, and Billy Bush, and John Hunter. They were all together. I was not far off, and I saw them. They went right on to my house. When they passed me I run further up on the hill to get out of the way of them. They went there and knocked down and beat my house a right smart while. And then they all got still, and directly I saw the fire rise.

*Question:* How many of these men were there?

*Answer:* A good many; I couldn't tell how many, but these I knew. The others I didn't. . . .

*Question:* What was the reason given for burning your house?

*Answer:* There was speaking down there last year and I came to it. They all kept at me to go. I went home and they quizzed me to hear what was said, and I told them as far as my senses allowed me.

*Question:* Where was this speaking?

*Answer:* Here in this town. I went on and told them, and then they all said I was making laws; or going to have the land, and the Ku-Klux were going to beat me for bragging that I would have land. John Hunter told them on me, I suppose, that I said I was going to have land. . . .

*Question:* Was that the only reason you know for your house being burned?

*Answer:* That is all the reason. All the Ku-Klux said all that they had against me was that I was bragging and boasting that I wanted the land. . . .

By Mr. Van Trump:

*Question:* Do you mean to say that they said they burned the house for that reason?

*Answer:* No sir; they burned the house because they could not catch me. I don't know any other reason. . . .

*Question:* Who was John Hunter?

*Answer:* He is a colored man. I worked for him all last summer. I worked with him hoeing his cotton and corn.

<sup>1</sup> Another freedman who testified before the committee in Spartanburg.

*Question:* What was he doing with these Ku-Klux?

*Answer:* I don't know. He was with them. . . .

*Question:* How did you come to be named Lucy McMillan?

*Answer:* I was a slave of Robert McMillan. I always belonged to him.

*Question:* You helped raise Kennedy and John?<sup>2</sup>

*Answer:* Not John, but Kennedy I did. When he was a little boy I was with him.

*Question:* Did he always like you?

*Answer:* Yes, sir. They always pretended to like us.

*Question:* That is while you were a slave?

*Answer:* Yes, sir, while I was a slave, but never afterward. They didn't care for us then.

<sup>2</sup> Sons of Robert McMillan.



### **Testimony of Mervin Givens, Spartanburg, South Carolina, July 12, 1871**

Mervin Givens (colored) sworn and examined.

By Mr. Stevenson:

*Question:* Your name in old times was Mery Moss?

*Answer:* Yes, sir; but since freedom I don't go by my master's name. My name now is Givens.

*Question:* What is your age?

*Answer:* About forty I expect. . . .

*Question:* Have you ever been visited by the Ku-Klux?

*Answer:* Yes, sir.

*Question:* When?

*Answer:* About the last of April.

*Question:* Tell what they said and did.

*Answer:* I was asleep when they came to my house, and did not know anything about them until they broke in on me.

*Question:* What time of night was it?

*Answer:* About twelve o'clock at night. They broke in on me and frightened me right smart, being asleep. They ordered me to get up and make a light. As quick as I could gather my senses I bounced up and made a light, but not quick enough. They jumped at me and struck me with a pistol, and made a knot<sup>1</sup> that you can see there now. By the time I made the light I caught the voice of them, and as soon as I could see by the light, I looked around and saw by the

<sup>1</sup> Bump.

Source: *Report of the Joint Select Committee*, vol. 2, *South Carolina*, Part 2, 698–700.

size of the men and voice so that I could judge right off who it was. By that time they jerked the case off the pillow and jerked it over my head and ordered me out of doors. That was all I saw in the house. After they carried me out of doors I saw nothing more. They pulled the pillow-slip over my head and told me if I took off they would shoot me. They carried me out and whipped me powerful.

*Question:* With what?

*Answer:* With sticks and hickories. They whipped me powerful.

*Question:* How many lashes?

*Answer:* I can't tell. I have no knowledge at all about it. May be a hundred or two. Two men whipped me and both at once.

*Question:* Did they say anything to you?

*Answer:* They cursed me and told me I had voted the radical ticket, and they intended to beat me so I would not vote it again.

*Question:* Did you know any of them?

*Answer:* Yes, sir; I think I know them.

*Question:* What were there names?

*Answer:* One was named John Thomson and the other was John Zimmerman. Those are the two men I think it was.

*Question:* How many were there in all?

*Answer:* I didn't see but two. After they took me out, I was blindfolded; but I could judge from the horse tracks that there were more than two horses there. Some were horses and some were mules. It was a wet, rainy night; they whipped me stark naked. I had a brown undershirt on and they tore it clean off. . . .

By Mr. Van Trump:

*Question:* There were, then, two men who came to your house?

*Answer:* Yes, sir; that was all I could see.

*Question:* Were they disguised?

*Answer:* Yes, sir.

*Question:* How?

*Answer:* They had on some sort of gray-looking clothes, and much the same sort of thing over their face. One of them had a sort of high hat with tassel and sort of horns.

*Question:* How far did John Thomson live from there?

*Answer:* I think it is two or three miles.

*Question:* Were you acquainted with him?

*Answer:* Yes, sir.

*Question:* Where?

*Answer:* At my house. My wife did a good deal of washing for them both. I was very well-acquainted with their size and their voices. They were boys I was raised with. . . .

*Question:* Did you tell anybody else it was John Thomson?

*Answer:* I have never named it.

*Question:* Why?

*Answer:* I was afraid to.

*Question:* Are you afraid now?

*Answer:* I am not afraid to own the truth as nigh<sup>2</sup> as I can.

*Question:* Is there any difference in owning to the truth on the 12th of July and on the 1st of April?

*Answer:* The black people have injured themselves very much by talking, and I was afraid.

*Question:* Are you not afraid now?

*Answer:* No, sir; because I hope there will be a stop put to it. . . .

*Question:* Do you think we three gentlemen can stop it?

*Answer:* No, sir; but I think you can get some help.

*Question:* Has anybody been telling you that?

*Answer:* No, sir; nobody told me that. . . .

*Question:* Why did you not commence a prosecution against Thomson and Zimmerman?

*Answer:* I am like the rest, I reckon; I am too cowardly.

*Question:* Why do you not do it now; you are not cowardly now?

*Answer:* I shouldn't have done it now.

*Question:* I am talking about bringing suit for that abuse on that night. Why do you not have them arrested?

*Answer:* It ought to be done.

*Question:* Why do you not do it?

*Answer:* For fear they would shoot me. If I were to bring them up here and could not prove the thing exactly on them, and they were to get out of it, I would not expect to live much longer.

<sup>2</sup> Near.

## 6

### *Majority Report of the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States, February 19, 1872, Submitted by Luke P. Poland*

Poland was a Republican representative from Vermont.

The proceedings and debates in Congress show that, whatever other causes were assigned for disorders in the late insurrectionary States, the execution of the laws and the security of life and property were alleged to be most seriously

*Source:* Report of the Joint Select Committee, vol. 1, Reports of the Committee, 2-3, 98-99.

threatened by the existence and acts of organized bands of armed and disguised men, known as Ku-Klux. . . .

The evidence is equally decisive that redress cannot be obtained against those who commit crimes in disguise and at night. The reasons assigned are that identification is difficult, almost impossible; that when this is attempted, the combinations and oaths of the order come in and release the culprit by perjury either upon the witness-stand or in the jury-box; and that the terror inspired by their acts, as well as the public sentiment in their favor in many localities, paralyzes the arm of civil power. . . .

The race so recently emancipated, against which banishment or serfdom is thus decreed, but which has been clothed by the Government with the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, ought not to be, and we feel assured will not be left hereafter without protection against the hostilities and sufferings it has endured in the past, as long as the legal and constitutional powers of the Government are adequate to afford it. Communities suffering such evils and influenced by such extreme feelings may be slow to learn that relief can come only from a ready obedience to and support of constituted authority, looking to the modes provided by law for redress of all grievances. That Southern communities do not seem to yield this ready obedience at once should not deter the friends of good government in both sections from hoping and working for that end. . . .

The law of 1871<sup>1</sup> has been effective in suppressing for the present, to a great extent, the operations of masked and disguised men in North and South Carolina. . . . The apparent cessation of operations should not lead to a conclusion that community would be safe if protective measures were withdrawn. These should be continued until there remains no further doubt of the actual suppression and disarming of this wide-spread and dangerous conspiracy.

The results of suspending the writ of *habeas corpus* in South Carolina show that where the membership, mysteries, and power of the organization have been kept concealed this is the most and perhaps only effective remedy for its suppression; and in review of its cessation and resumption of hostilities at different times, of its extent and power, and that in several of the States where it exists the courts have not yet held terms at which the cases can be tried, we recommend that the power conferred on the President by the fourth section of that act<sup>2</sup> be extended until the end of the next session of Congress.

For the Senate:

JOHN SCOTT, Chairman  
Z. CHANDLER<sup>3</sup>

For the House of Representatives:

LUKE P. POLAND, Chairman  
HORACE MAYNARD<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Ku Klux Klan Act.

<sup>2</sup> To suspend the writ of *habeas corpus*.

<sup>3</sup> Republican senator from Michigan.

<sup>4</sup> Republican representative from Tennessee.

BENJ. F. RICE<sup>5</sup>  
JOHN POOL<sup>7</sup>  
DANIEL D. PRATT<sup>9</sup>

GLENNI W. SCOFIELD<sup>6</sup>  
JOHN F. FARNSWORTH<sup>8</sup>  
JOHN COBURN<sup>10</sup>  
JOB E. STEVENSON  
BENJ. F. BUTLER<sup>11</sup>  
WILLIAM E. LANSING<sup>12</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Republican senator from Arkansas.

<sup>6</sup> Republican representative from Pennsylvania.

<sup>7</sup> Republican senator from North Carolina.

<sup>8</sup> Republican representative from Illinois.

<sup>9</sup> Republican senator from Indiana.

<sup>10</sup> Republican representative from Indiana.

<sup>11</sup> Republican representative from Massachusetts.

<sup>12</sup> Republican representative from New York.

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### *Minority Report of the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States, February 19, 1872, Submitted by James B. Beck*

Beck was a Democratic representative from Kentucky.

The atrocious measures by which millions of white people have been put at the mercy of the semi-barbarous negroes of the South, and the vilest of the white people, both from the North and South, who have been constituted the leaders of this black horde, are now sought to be justified and defended by defaming the people upon whom this unspeakable outrage had been committed. . . .

There is no doubt about the fact that great outrages were committed by bands of disguised men during those years of lawlessness and oppression. The natural tendency of all such organizations is to violence and crime. . . . It is so everywhere; like causes produce like results. Sporadic cases of outrages occur in every community. . . . But, as a rule, the worst governments produce the most disorders. South Carolina is confessedly in the worst condition of any of the States. Why? Because her government is the worst, or what makes it still worse,

Source: *Report of the Joint Select Committee*, vol. 1, *Reports of the Committee*, 289, 463–64, 514–16, 588.

her people see no hope in the future. . . . There never was a Ku-Klux in Virginia, nobody pretends there ever was. Why? Because Virginia escaped carpet-bag rule. . . .

The Constitution was trampled under foot in the passage of what is known as the Ku-Klux law; a power was delegated to the President which could be exercised by the legislative authority alone; whole communities of innocent people were put under the ban of executive vengeance by the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* at the mere whim and caprice of the President; and all for what? For the apprehension and conviction of a few poor, deluded, ignorant, and unhappy wretches, goaded to desperation by the insolence of the negroes, and who could, had the radical authorities of South Carolina done their duty, just as easily have been prosecuted in the State courts, and much more promptly and cheaply, than by all this imposing machinery of Federal power, through military and judicial departments. . . .

. . . The antagonism, therefore, which exists between these two classes of the population of South Carolina does not spring from any political cause, in the ordinary party sense of the term; but it grows out of that instinctive and irrepressible repugnance to compulsory affiliation with another race, planted by the God of nature in the breast of the white man, perhaps more strongly manifested in the uneducated portion of the people, and aggravated and intensified by the fact that the Negro has been placed as a *ruler* over him. . . .

We feel it would be a dereliction of duty on our part if, after what we have witnessed in South Carolina, we did not admonish the American people that the present condition of things in the South cannot last. It was an oft-quoted political apothegm, long prior to the war, that no government could exist "half slave and half free." The paraphrase of that proposition is equally true, that no government can long exist "half black and half white." If the republican party, or its all-powerful leaders in the North, cannot see this, if they are so absorbed in the idea of this newly discovered political divinity in the negro, that they cannot comprehend its social repugnance or its political dangers; or, knowing it, have the wanton, wicked, and criminal purpose of disregarding its consequences, whether in the present or in the future, and the great mass of American white citizens should still be so mad as to sustain them in their heedless career of forcing negro supremacy over white men, why then "farewell, a long farewell," to constitutional liberty on this continent, and the glorious form of government bequeathed to us by our fathers. . . .

The foregoing is a hurried, but, as we believe, a truthful statement of the political, moral, and financial condition of the State of South Carolina, under the joint rule of the Negro and the "reconstructive" policy of Congress.

FRANK BLAIR

T. F. BAYARD<sup>1</sup>

S. S. COX<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Democratic senator from Delaware.

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