

YANKEE UNION LEAGUE ATROCITIES

AGAINST WHITE & BLACK

by Mike Scruggs

Most people today know something about the Ku Klux Klan, but very few are familiar with the Union League of America, also called the Loyal League. In fact, the birth and growth of the Klan was largely a response to Union League bullying, violence, and murder. **The Union League perpetrated far more violence against both blacks and whites in the post Civil War Reconstruction years of 1865 to 1877 than the Klan.** Why has the violence of the Union League been shoved deep into the memory hole of history? It is because the Union League was essentially a quasi-federal agency carrying out the policies of Reconstruction. The factual history of this political despotism, corruption, and violence is a moral and political embarrassment, which the powerful guardians of counterfactual political narratives have relentlessly sought to suppress. This is even truer in today's social and political climate of hysterical political correctness that chains modern academics and media within narrow bounds of subject, reasoning, and speech.

In 1862, many in the North had become demoralized by Confederate victories in the field. Also pro-States Rights Democrats made substantial political gains in six Northern states. Many Republicans felt that the success of Union war policies and efforts were threatened by this. As a response, Union Clubs were formed in almost every town to support the war, the troops, and the Republican Party. These became the Union League of America. As the war was ending, Union League Clubs were also formed by Union loyalists in the South. These became a political arm of the Reconstruction and carpetbagger state governments. Their initial goal, shared with the Freedmen's Bureau, was to make sure that blacks registered to vote and voted Republican. Most of the loyalist whites soon dropped out of the League, and except for the carpetbagger politicians and Federal Army officers who formed its key leadership, the League was composed almost exclusively of former slaves and black soldiers of the Federal Army.

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Radical Republican leaders in Washington realized during the war that **if the South came back into the Union with Democrat Congressmen, the Republicans would lose the political dominance they had enjoyed since the 1860 election.** This is why the Radical Republicans in Congress wanted to shove Lincoln's replacement, Andrew Johnson, aside. Johnson was a former Democrat, a constitutional conservative still sympathetic to States Rights, and committed to following Lincoln's relatively lenient ideas about reconstructing the South. He was also incorruptible. They wanted control of Reconstruction. Their goal was first to punish, humiliate, and exploit the South, and then to remake it into a powerful political tool for permanent national dominance by a Republican Party tightly controlled by a small, but ruthless faction. The core leaders of that faction were radical abolitionists Thaddeus Stevens, Charles Sumner, Edwin Stanton, Benjamin Wade, and Benjamin "Beast" Butler.

These ruthless radicals believed the key to making the South solid Republican was the black vote. Thus it was critical to insure that blacks voted Republican. The March 1867 Reconstruction Act disenfranchised Confederate veterans for the foreseeable future. Thus 85% of the white vote was eliminated. The Radical Republicans also thought it necessary to alienate blacks from white Southerners, Democrats, and especially their former masters. Previous to the war and especially immediately following the war, the relationships between former slaves and masters were cooperative and often affectionate. **Most slaves in the South had been well treated, in many cases like family. The whites also appreciated the tremendous loyalty that most blacks had shown them during the war. The vast majority did not desert them during the war, and no Confederate Army in the field could have moved a mile without black wagon drivers and other logistical support.** They served in many capacities.

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Some had proven their loyalty and combat effectiveness in Confederate infantry and cavalry regiments.

Union League meetings were conducted as a mystical secret society with secret rituals. Meetings were especially devoted to stirring up enmity between blacks and whites. A catechism written by Radical Republicans in Congress was used in Union League meetings to create an unreasonable sense of entitlement, grievance, and resentment. They were taught that Northern Republican whites were their friends and allies and that white Southerners and Democrats were enemies to be hated and despised. They were frequently promised that they would receive land and livestock confiscated from the whites. In some cases they were even promised racial dominance that would entitle them to the wives and daughters of their white enemies. This led to a number of violent racial incidents. Such racial incidents were frequently used by carpetbagger governments to demonstrate to Washington and the Northern press and public the continued need for Southern Reconstruction. Other promises were in the form of threats of a death penalty by hanging to any black who betrayed the League by voting Democrat.

With the coming of Radical Reconstruction and martial law, the role of the Union League became more aggressive. Union League militias were formed and were an enforcement arm of the carpetbagger governments. The militia was composed of former slaves and black troops stationed in each state. The Union League had 250,000 men in ten Southern States. North Carolina's Scalawag Governor William W. Holden had a Union League militia of 80,000 at his bidding. **The primary role of the Union League was now to keep the corrupt carpetbagger governments in power. This included suppression of competing carpetbagger factions.**

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In order to insure that all blacks voted Republican the Union League bullied and beat other blacks into submission. Even flogging with the lash was used. If that did not work, they exacted the death penalty, frequently by lynching. In order to intimidate whites from seeking power or influencing black voting, they conducted terror campaigns. Barns and sometimes houses of whites were burned. In some cases small towns were burned as in Warren and Hamburg, Arkansas. Men, women, and children were killed in raids on "insurrectionary" communities and counties. Their deaths were reported as "killed trying to escape." There were Union League barn burnings and other destruction in every North Carolina County. During a single week of 1869 in Gaston County, North Carolina, nine barns were burned. In two months of the same year in Edgecombe County, two churches, several cotton gins, a cotton factory, and many barns and homes were burned. The Raleigh Sentinel reported on August 29 of the same year that ten Federal Army companies associated with the Union League had terrorized the Goldsboro area and committed violent depredations of all sorts. It reported the actions of the troops "so violent that it was unsafe for women to leave their homes." This was all part of the Reconstruction mandate to remake the South.

In Myrta Lockett Avary's 1906 book, *Dixie After the War*, she relates a tragic atrocity. In Upstate South Carolina, a group of Union League Federal soldiers marching and singing halted to discharge a volley of bullets into a country church during services, instantly killing a fourteen-year-old girl. At a nearby residence a squad of the same troops entered a home and bound the elderly owner as they ransacked his house and argued over who would first ravage his daughter. The girl when approached drove a concealed knife through the heart of her assailant. She was then beaten to death by the rest. But under corrupt

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military and carpetbagger rule, Southern whites had little recourse to justice. No Federal justice occurred.

By 1870, the corruption of the carpetbagger governments and the violence of the Union League were becoming a concern to a significant minority in the U. S. Congress. But as Klan activity increased in response to Union League and other Reconstruction misdeeds, the Radical Republicans formed a committee to investigate the Klan. **A minority report by Northern Democrats and Conservative Republicans representing more than a third of the committee, however, noted that the Union League had “instilled hatred of the white race” and had “made arson, rape, robbery, and murder a daily occurrence.”** They also noted the role of corrupt government and Union League violence in driving whites to take law into their own hands.

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Mike Scruggs is the author of two books: *The Un-Civil War: Shattering the Historical Myths*; and *Lessons from the Vietnam War: Truths the Media Never Told You*, and over 600 articles on military history, national security, intelligent design, genealogical genetics, immigration, current political affairs, Islam, and the Middle East.

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