

EDITORIAL

CAUSE AND EFFECT IN THE SOUTH.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE full text of the speeches, delivered on last May 14 before the conference of the National Negro Committee in this city, and now given out, suggests the idea that, if the speeches were delivered in the order in which they are given, then, instead of effect following cause, cause followed effect.

For instance, the Rev. John Haynes Holmes of the Church of the Messiah said in part:

“The political freedom of the black man in this country was purchased at a price which staggered the world. A full half-century has passed away since that momentous struggle was completed, and yet to-day, when we turn to the South and ask regarding the condition of our black brother, for whose freedom our fathers paid so dearly, we find that his condition is little better than that of his father, who was bought and sold upon the block. ‘The negro to-day,’ says an influential New York clergyman, is ‘free on paper; the black man is one of our fellow-citizens in theory. He is reckoned as a man and not as an animal on the tables of the United States census’, but, as a matter of fact, in the everyday world of practical affairs, the negro is still a slave, and if there is anything that is perfectly plain in the public sentiment of the South, it is that the negro shall be made to keep that place of shameful subjection from which we believed that he had been rescued by the blood and fury of the great rebellion.”

After the Rev. Haynes, spoke Prof. Albert Bushnell Hart of Harvard, and, in part, he said: “About one half of the cotton grown on Southern plantations is grown by paid Negro laborers and annually picked and delivered in the market.”

The speech containing this passage should have preceded the speech containing the picture of the degraded condition in which the property class of the South keeps the Negro—lynchings included, as backers-up of Negro disfranchisement. The second speech furnishes the cause, the first only records the effect.

It is as Workingman, not as Negro, that the Negro is kept down in the South. It

is the Labor Question, not the Race Question, that keeps the South in turmoil. All claims to the contrary are false pretence. The Southern property holder is to-day marshaling his Northern cousin the path that he should tread—and on which he is hastening to tread.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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