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EDITORIAL

THE SECRET IS OUT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

FROM a quarter least expected comes a priceless flashlight upon the so-called “Negro Question.” That quarter is the Tennessee Bar Association, with **MARTIN W. LITTLETON** of Brooklyn as spokesman.

Addressing the Association at its Nashville meeting on May 23, Mr. Littleton said:

“The doctrine of universal manhood suffrage in a Republic which is taking into its citizenship every race, tongue and color, from everywhere, will before many years, require a re-examination, and, in my judgment, a restriction.

“The East will be oppressed with the weight of this problem before many years as much as the South is oppressed with the weight of the Negro problem now, and at the same time and for the same reason demand a restriction. We may then expect that some common ground will be found upon which the North and the South together shall wisely, but firmly, impose this restriction.”

The “Negro Question” has hitherto been handled by the Southrons and their sympathizing Northrons as a “separate” Question, a “unique” Question, a “peculiar” Question. The Negro was ranked with the Mongolian. The “Negro Question” was dignified with the flavor of Science and Patriotism. It was a “Racial Question,” the settlement of which was requisite for the preservation of the purity of the “White Race”—the “Caucasian,” the “Indo-Germanic” race. So ran the canting argument of the anti-Negroes. Here and there actions, which always speak louder than words, tended to throw discredit upon the protestations of the self-appointed guardians of the purity of the “White Race.” Most mulattoes—and these abound mostly where the anti-Negroes most abound—are living monuments of the insincerity of the aforementioned paladins of “White Race” purity. What, then, is at bottom of the fierce

and increasingly fierce crusade against the Negro?

The speech of the Northern anti-Negro lawyer before the anti-Negro Bar Association of the anti-Negro State of Tennessee answers the question, at last, in full, convincingly.

The East is not troubled by any “Negro Question”; nor does any Asiatic immigration pour across its shore-line. The immigration that pours into the East comes from Europe—Bohemians and Irish, Hungarians and Jews, Italians and Finns, Slavs and Scandinavians, Germans and Poles, etc.—all of them branches of the “White Race.” The admission that this immigration constitutes a problem; that the weight of it “oppresses” the East; and that it affords common ground to the anti-Negroes to join the East in “demanding” and “wisely, but firmly impose” a restriction of the suffrage lays bare the moving spring of the anti-Negroes.

That which Slav and Jew and Irish and the rest of the European immigration has in common with the Negro is that it is proletarian. Anti-proletarianism is the essence of the “Negro Question.” Socialism has long ago pointed to the fact. The Tennessee Bar Association now admits it.

The Crusade against the Negro is not a Crusade for “race purity.” It is a Crusade against the Working Class. It turns against the Negro under one pretext; it turns against other portions of the workers under other pretexts—but wherever active it is active in the interest of the reign of the Plunderbund, and aims at reducing the Working Class of America to the condition of pariahs.

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

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