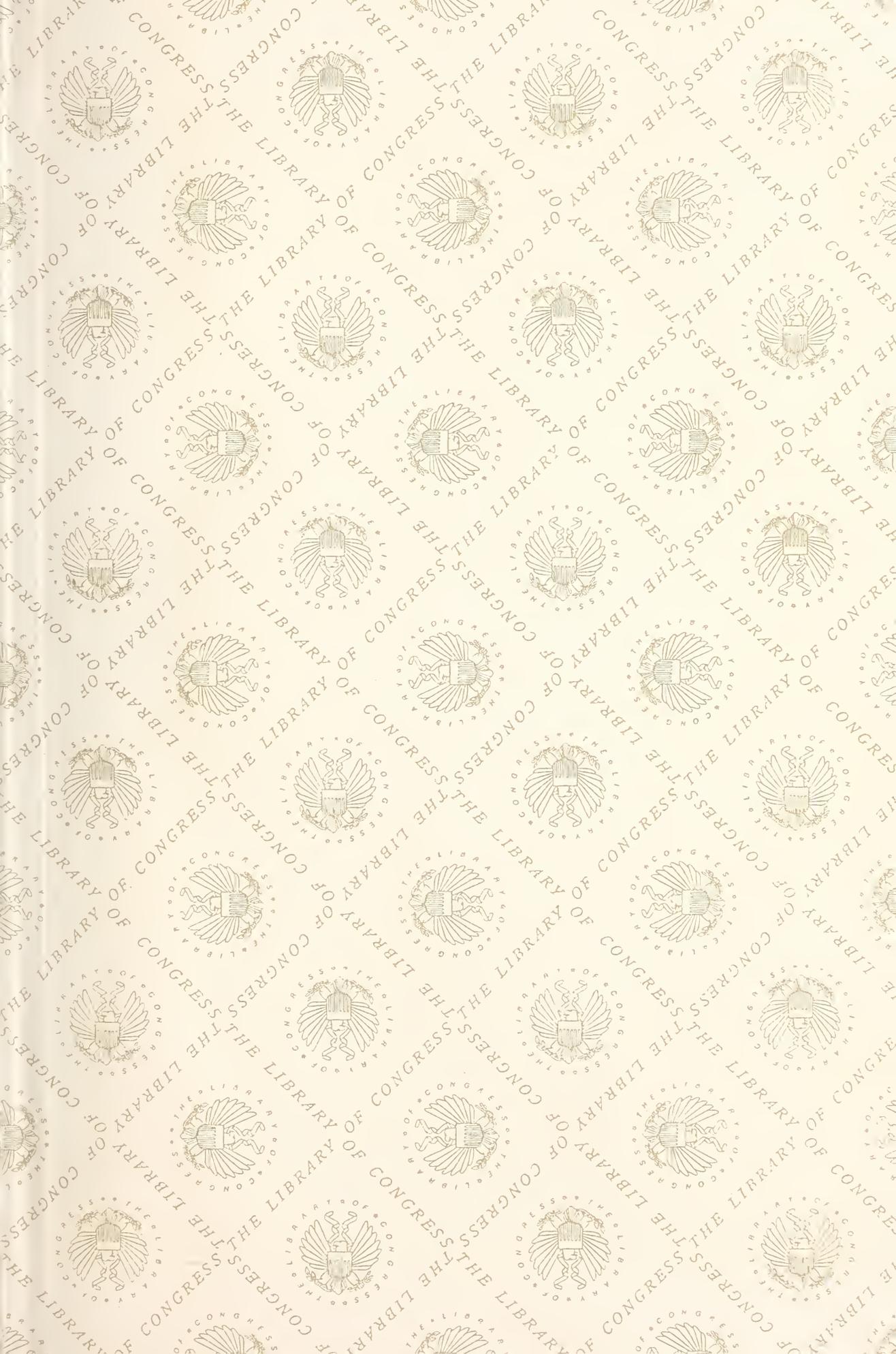


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THE TRUTH ABOUT LYNCHING



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ITS CAUSES AND EFFECTS

BY

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THE REMEDY

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CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF LYNCHING

By Asa Philip Randolph

To begin with, what is a lynching?

Lynching, historically speaking, is a loose term applied to various forms of executing popular justice, or what is thought to be justice. It is the punishment of offenders by a summary procedure, ignoring and contrary to the strict forms of law. In short, the essence of lynching is that it is extra-legal.

What is its history?

In early Colonial days lynching had been practised. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the American population expanded westward faster than well-defined civil institutions could follow, and the western frontiers were infested with desperadoes who preyed upon the better classes. To suppress these miscreants, in the absence of strong legal institutions, resort was continually made to lynch law. We had instances of lynching in New England and the middle colonies in the mistreatment of the Indians and the wanton disregard of the laws protecting them. Of course, it must be remembered that it was not until 1830 that lynching was associated with and connoted killing. There was a custom in various colonies of administering summary justice to wife-beaters and idlers. The acts of the Regulators of North Carolina in 1767-71, the popular tribunal of the Revolutionary period, when the disaffection against Great Britain weakened the authority of civil government at a time when the hostilities between Patriots and Tories were an incentive to extra-legal violence. In the South lynching was long employed in dealing with agitators, white and black, who were charged with inciting Negro slaves to riot. The Ku Klux Klan, the White Cappers and Red Shirts applied the lynch law. It is, typically, an American institution, though Russia and southern Europe have practised it. So much then for an historical survey of lynching.

Now, then, the next question which logically arises is: What are its causes? And this question is timely, and in point, in view of the utter lack and dire need of information by the American nation on this vital question, big with social interest and dangers for the entire country.

All of us are agreed that lynching is wrong, that it is a crime and that it ought to be stopped; even our Southern white brothers are beginning to see this; but few of us have very carefully and critically examined into the causes of and remedies for this social phenomenon. And, yet, scientific method teaches that before prescribing for any disease, whether physical, mental or moral, a cautious and scientific inquiry should be made into the cause of the disease. Because in order to understand how to eradicate the effects, you must know the cause of said effects, and proceed to remove the cause. To illustrate: A community is situated beside a swampy marsh where poisonous

vapors hover over the putrid, pestiferous, standing waters, and where various disease germs and mosquitoes infest.

The people of this community suffer continually from malarial fever. Scientists have determined that the mosquito is a carrier of malarial germs. Now, is it not logical to assume that the swampy marsh is the cause of the malady and the mosquito but the occasion, and in order to wipe out the effects it is necessary to remove the cause of the occasion—the marsh?

Then, this is no less true of lynching than of any other disease or social evil, such as child labor, white slavery, intemperance, poverty and criminal acts in general.

For clarity of exposition I shall divide the causes into two classes, viz.: the indirect or final cause and the proximate, direct or efficient cause.

Now, before proceeding to build our structure of the true, positive causes of lynching, we shall do the excavation work of clearing away the debris of alleged but fallacious causes.

First, it is maintained by some that race "prejudice" is the cause. But the fallacy of this contention is immediately apparent in view of the fact that out of 3,337 persons lynched between 1882 and 1903, there were 1,192 white persons.

Second, it is held by others that "rape" of white women is the real cause. Again this argument is untenable when it is known that out of the entire number of persons lynched only 34 per cent. can be ascribed to rape as the cause.

Third, still others contend that the "law's delay" is the controlling cause. This also is without force when the fact is known that men have been lynched after they have had their day in court and despite the fact that they (the accused) were convicted or acquitted. Leo Frank is an instance in proof. Thus much for what are not some of the causes of lynching.

We shall consider now the real and positive causes of this evil. There are three cardinal reasons, viz., the economic, political and social.

First, what are the economic causes? By economic causes, I mean material gains which are the motor-forces of individual and social actions. For instance: A Jewish and an Irish lad were fighting and they were calling each other all kinds of humiliating names. Presently, along came two passers-by who speculated as to the cause of the fight, giving various religious and sentimental reasons. But upon inquiry they were informed by the Irish lad that the d— Jew had his foot on his nuckle. Thus you see, not race nor religion, but the crass, materialistic, economic factor—the nuckle—was the sound reason for the scrap.

As to our first proposition, the economic cause. I maintain that the capitalist system is the fundamental cause of lynching. By the term capitalist system, I mean, in short, the exploitation of human labor-power and the natural resources of the country for private profits.

This is a system under which the tools with which the laborer works and the raw material upon which he works are owned by private individuals. Now our capitalist system expresses itself in different forms in different sections of the country. For instance, in the East manufactories, railroads and steam-

ships are the paramount economic factors; in the West, mining, railroads and steamships, and in the South cotton plantations, lumber mills, turpentine, and railroads. The banking institutions of the South, which extend the loans to poor white and black farmers, are the channels through which the commodities of the industries find their way to their local, national and world markets. Out of these industrial arrangements have grown certain socio-economic conditions, namely, peonage, the crop-lien system, tenant-farming and peasantry, which are the more immediate causes of lynching.

First, what is peonage? Peonage is a system of serfdom, the principle of which is, that if an employee owes his master he must continue to serve him until the debt is paid, the only escape being that if another employer is willing to come forward and assume the debt the employee is allowed to transfer his obligation to the new master. In practice the system amounts to vassalage, inasuch as the debt is usually allowed to reach a figure which there is no hope of paying off.

Now how is this system maintained? During the Reconstruction Period the Negro tasted and became intoxicated with the new wine of freedom and was loath to return to the farm, under conditions, in many instances, worse than slavery. Unsophisticated Negroes looked wistfully for the promised "mule and forty acres." But lumber must be cut, cotton must be picked and turpentine must be dipped. In short, profits must be made. Negroes must work or be made to work, besides they must work cheaply.

Thus the "black code" and vagrancy laws of the South. These laws provided for the imprisonment of all Negroes who had no visible means of support. The result is that, hordes of unemployed Negroes are hustled off to jail and the convict camps. Their fines are paid by the lumber, cotton and turpentine operators; they are assigned into their custody; put to work at starvation wages, besides being compelled to trade at the company's store, which prevents their ever getting out of debt. They are also compelled to sign certain labor contracts, the non-performance of which is proof presumptive of fraudulent intent at the time of making it, which the state laws make a crime. And as a white planter himself tells the story: A planter can arrest a man upon the criminal charge of receiving money under false pretenses, which is equivalent to the charge of stealing; you get him convicted; he is fined, and being penniless, in lieu of the money to pay the fine he goes to jail; then you pay the fine and costs and the judge assigns him to you to work out the fine and you have him back on your plantation, backed up by the authority of the state. This is peonage. It is an economic system. It is maintained for profits.

We pass next to the crop-lien system. The crop-lien system is the method of mortgaging the planted and unplanted crops of the poor farmers. It operates in this way: The poor farmers are in need of provisions until harvesting time; the white merchants supply them for a part of their crop—the share usually being so large as to keep—a perpetual lien on the farmers' crops. Under this system the Negroes are fastened to the farms.

The Negro farmer, being in debt, cannot leave. To escape is to violate a contract; to violate a contract is to commit a crime which might result in being remanded to the convict camps or lynched. Next we shall consider tenant-farming, which is explained by its title.

Usually, however, the tenant-farmer has been a farm owner who, due to the crop-lien system, has lost control of the said farm. The next stage of the tenant-farmer is the farm laborer, which is the final goal of the poor white and black farmer in the South. Thus an economic system which makes peasants out of the Negroes and poor whites. In the South a peasant is an object of reproach, the scum—the flotsam and jetsam of society. They are illiterate, morally depraved and physically broken. The fruits of this system are prejudice, jim-crow, segregation and lynching. Banking institutions and loan agencies supply the money for the maintenance at rates of interest as high as 60 and 100 per cent on the dollar.

Negroes don't protest or resist because they are intimidated and cowed by lynching bees. Negroes and poor whites don't unite—unite against a common exploiter—because race prejudice exists and is artfully cultivated to keep them apart. The weapons of capital in other parts of the country are: The state militias, secret-detective-strike-breaking agencies, religion or nationality. So that in the East and West we have our Bayonne, West Virginia and Ludlow, and in the South we have our Waco and Memphis horrors. Of more recent date we have the East St. Louis massacre, the cause of which is fundamentally economic. Negro laborers were imported into the above-named place to work. They were either imported to take the jobs of white workers or to increase the supply of labor, and thereby force down wages. This was the real cause of the conflict.

This is similar to the principle of picketing by labor unions. White laborers will not only shoot down Negro laborers but also white laborers who are imported by capitalists to take their jobs or lower their wages. Such is the history of the labor movement in this country. Negro laborers would do the same thing if they were in the white laborers' places.

We might as well meet the big, bald fact that self interest is the Supreme Ruler of the actions of men. The reason does not lie in race prejudice, but in the class struggle. Blame your capitalist system. Of course, this does not justify or expiate the crime; it simply explains it. Certainly the culprits should be brought to justice. We also have had a race riot in London, the roots of which go back to our capitalist system. The association with white women was but the occasion, of the London race riot.

We come now to the political cause of lynching. The "black code" and vagrancy laws, whose purpose I have aforementioned, were enacted by white men who, through political activities, gained their places in the legislative halls of the state. The laws which make the non-performance of labor contracts a crime are placed on the statute books by certain anti-labor and incidentally anti-Negro politicians. The sheriffs of the counties into whose custody Negroes charged with criminal acts are placed, are nominated and elected by political parties. The parties are controlled by certain financial forces which lend money to poor white and black farmers at extortionate rates of interest. The lumber mills, cotton and turpentine interest, big depositors of the banks, shape and control the policy of those financial institutions. The political parties respond to the pressure of finance; the representatives of the parties (not the people) in the legislative bodies, respond to the parties and hence we have our anti-Negro, anti-labor legislation in the South. Political parties in the South, as in the North, are extra-legal organizations composed of citizens who are controlled by moneyed interests.

So that when a mob demand a Negro in the custody of a sheriff nominated and elected by a political machine whose campaign funds are made up by the banks and loan agencies which lend money to poor whites and Negroes at usurious rates of interest, you can realize and appreciate the result, the manner in which the said sheriff will act. Self-interest is the controlling principle of an individual's or a community's action, unless the actor in question is either ignorant or insane. Thus a sheriff can always be expected to act in the interest of those who have the power to remove him from his place. Not until you shift the seat of political control can you depend upon those in authority to act differently. No sane man can be expected to act against his own interest. We can no longer depend upon the "good man" theory. It has long since been exploded. We have got to adopt a system which will make it unprofitable to be otherwise. Now, the Republican and Democratic parties in the South are controlled by the same money forces. They are a bi-partisan machine which reflect the policies and interests of the paramount economic forces there—cotton, railroads, turpentine, lumber, and the bourgeoisie merchants. In the East and West these parties reflect the policies and interests of oil, steel, coal, railroads and manufacturing.

Another political course of lynching stated negatively is, disfranchisement, whose tentacles, like a mighty octopus, strangle the voice of protest in the throats of the common people. Intelligent Negroes are without voice, notwithstanding the fact that they pay taxes. Moreover, but one-third of the whites of voting age vote in the South. Evidently the uncrowned financial kings of the South find it more advantageous to rule by an electoral minority because it can be more easily bribed and handled than a large mass of voters. Again, too often, has a young white man's political promotion depended upon his scurrilous harrangues against the Negro.

We come now to the social causes: The press, the church, the school system and the propinquity of the races. First, how has the press caused lynching? The Southern press has been controlled by the regnant economic forces in the South. Their editorial and news policies have been so adjusted as to suit the Southern plutocracy. Here, again, it is apparent that he who controls the bread and butter will also control and shape the ideas. Newspapers like the Atlanta Georgian have carried such headlines as: "A Subject for the Stake," "Lynch the Brute," "Lynch the Wretch." During the Atlanta Race Riot, September 22, 1906, the Atlanta Evening News carried inflammatory headlines which fanned the fires of race prejudice.

Second, the church is the recipient of large contributions from the financial rulers of the South and naturally preach the Christianity of profits.

In very truth the beneficiaries of a system cannot be expected to destroy it. Hence, the Methodist Church split over the issue of slavery (which was an economic question pure and simple) into North and South, in 1860. The Church of the South prayed and preached for the victory of the cotton kings. The church of the North blessed and anointed the industrial capitalists.

Third, the most important social institution in the South is controlled by legislators who are controlled by political parties which are, in turn, controlled by financial lords who regard it safer and more profitable to keep the common people, white and black, in virtual ignorance and superstition, because ignorant people don't strike for higher wages and better working conditions. So that the school terms, in some parts of the South, last for

only three months. The educational appropriation of the Southern states is the lowest paid of any section in the country. The slave states appropriate \$2.22 for each Negro pupil per year and \$4.92 for each white.

This but indicates the low social state of both races in the South.

Fourth, the propinquity of the races in the South has, undoubtedly, operated to accentuate the feeling of race prejudice.

This doubtless is due to the extreme oppositeness of physical characteristics. Of course the racial differences are not a cause, but an occasion for race strife. The social mind of the South is the product of a peculiar environment. For instance, the social heritage of slavery and the Reconstruction Period still rankles in the bosom of Southern society. And the attack by a Negro upon a white person, the doctrine that the Negro is a hewer of wood and a drawer of water; the Biblical citation of Canaan in proof; the doctrine of the white man's superiority preached by political, religious and journalistic demagogues to the poor, ignorant whites; the doctrine of the sacredness of the Southern white woman shown by the Southern white man's chivalry toward her in public conveyances, combined with the ignorance and superstition of the common whites and blacks, have a tremendous psychological and emotional power in occasioning lynching. I say occasioning because the cause lies deeper. They are the fuse. The magazine is the capitalist system. Most anything in the South may be the occasion of a lynching. It may be a "well dressed" Negro in country districts, the use of the word "yes" by a Negro to a white man, asking a white woman for the name of a street, the fighting of a colored and a white boy, and the use of good English to white folks. A very conspicuous characteristic of the South is its hyper-sensitiveness. There still persists the duel. Homicides are more numerous than in any other part of the country. When the sister of a young white man or the daughter of a father is fooled by another white man, seldom is recourse made to courts, but the accused is usually shot down like a dog in the open streets.

The results are that the auto-suggestion of a community when it hears of a crime, is to form itself into a mob and to commit murder, burn human beings and raze houses until it has avenged the crime. The philosophy of the mob is, that present crime will avenge past crime, and prevent future crime, which, needless to say, history has shown to be erroneous. The effects are, that in some parts of the South a state of lawlessness exists and mob law invariably rules. Negroes, innocent and guilty alike, are hated, hounded and hunted by white men and women momentarily transformed into beasts. The educational system is demoralized. The pulpit, that erstwhile eminence of sacredness, is used as a promontory from which to hurl incendiary diatribes against the Negro. The press, that paladium of human liberties, is used as the channel through which journalistic adders vent their venomous spleen to poison the currents of public opinion. Political demagogues use the ballot, the mightiest of the ages, to fasten the fetters of disfranchisement upon the blacks and poor whites. In the Southern South revenge has become the civic motive. And when such is the case a just proportion between crime and penalty cannot long be maintained, and every citizen, black and white, becomes exposed to the passions of the crowd. Penalty therefore ceases to be a curative of evil and becomes the instrument of hatred. Tiberius Gracchus would have rendered Rome a nobler service had he fostered only sound

motives of government, but he sought to avenge the wrong done his partisans rather than to correct them, he introduced violence into the elections, which started a flow of blood which made the land incarnadine and destroyed the very government he sought to save. When revenge became the motive in France liberty became the patron of crime and murder became a sport. So the terrible fruits of lynching must inevitably appear in the insecurity of the social order it claims to defend. Courts in the South have degenerated into a machinery for wreaking vengeance upon citizens, and the verdicts of juries are the passions of the mob instead of the voice of justice. Finally, the effect is that the civilized world looks upon American democracy as a mockery.

The conditions are that white men and black men and white women and black women are unconsciously treading upon the crater of a social volcano whose molten lava of class passions, emotions and race hatred threaten to drench the land in blood; to wash away the dykes of our false civilization; to sweep on in its course the derelict kings of capitalism and the slimy and poisonous germs of race prejudice and to erect upon the ruins thereof a new civilization, a new democracy, a new humanity, fortified and armed with universal suffrage and universal education.

THE REMEDY FOR LYNCHING

By CHANDLER OWEN

The causes of lynching, as we have been told, are economic, political and social. The causes, here as elsewhere, suggest the remedy. The remedies for lynching are economic, political, social and legal.

It is merely elementary that if peonage and wage slavery, reflected through the crop lien system, tenant farming, the lumber swamps, turpentine districts and the miserable commissary system which accompanies them, are deeply rooted as the causes of lynching, the removal or the considerable modification of those causes, is essential before lynching can be abolished.

But the complex part of all is, how are peonage and wage slavery, with their concomitant evils, to be destroyed? And this directly carries us to find out how are they produced? Peonage and wage slavery exist, wherever they exist, merely because there is a surplus of unskilled and unorganized labor. Where the supply of labor is greater than the demand, the employer can impose any wage he pleases upon the worker, and his heart is seldom any bigger than the barest subsistence by which the worker can be made a "semi-fit" driving horse. So in the South there has been, and still is, a surplus of unskilled labor—both black and white. Since it is unskilled, it is unorganized, and often disorganized. I especially call attention to the "unorganized" condition of labor, because there may be a considerable surplus of a thing at times, but if properly controlled a price may be fixed somewhat arbitrarily. Just as prices are extortionate when the land is filled with plenty, because those who control the supplies of certain goods corner them and only put upon the open market a supply about commensurate with the demand; so labor, when organized, may have a surplus, but by the intelligent organization of such labor, the employed supporting the unemployed in their demands, it is possible to corner labor and also control the labor market. Hence the first step toward the abolition of lynching is the destruction of peonage and wage slavery by the organization of labor so as to limit the supply put upon the market.

But besides limiting the supply on the open market by cornering the commodity, it is possible actually to limit or lessen the supply of labor just as it is possible actually to lessen the supply of food, clothing and houses. This is sure to create a demand and since it acts to that end automatically, even the ignorant and unskilled Negro will profit by it through sheer inability not to profit by it. Mobility of labor often accomplishes this end. For instance, if Boston needs 2,000 carpenters and there are in New York 1,800 idle carpenters, the New York carpenter labor market can be made secure and stable by the moving of the 1,800 idle carpenters to Boston; while in Boston their idleness here cannot act to prevent them from getting the full market demand. This is what we call adjusting the supply to the demand.

A similar force just now is operating among Negroes. We call it the "migration of Negroes." They are coming from the South, where they are a big

surplus, and going to the North, East and West, where they are sorely needed. Two years ago they could hardly get a job in the East or West at any price. Now they have set their minimum wage at \$2.50 per day and many of them are receiving from \$3.50 to \$12 a day. Why? Simply because they moved from where they were getting very low wages because of their very high excess in numbers, and came where they were not a surplus, which makes it possible for them to command big wages.

This migration of Negroes, then, is the biggest force operating to-day toward the removal of peonage and its consequent evil—lynching. And this truckling advice which “big Negro” leaders are giving us about “Stay South” is the most hypocritical, dishonest and dishonorable counsel which their bosses have ever hired them to give out.

The migration of Negroes is neither in principle nor aim a whit different from the Spanish gold chasers who came to this country and South America. Negroes are chasing gold also. Their aim is not different from the Pilgrim fathers who came to this country in search of liberty and freedom from oppression. Negroes, too, are fleeing from the South’s oppression and seeking liberty and freedom more truly than the Pilgrim fathers. The Irishman and the Italian came to this country in search of opportunity to work and to worship. The Negroes are doing the same thing. The German came here in search of freedom and opportunity in a two-fold method or installment. Part of them came early and part after the unsuccessful revolution of 1848, when Germany revolted. The Negro comes North also in two installments like the German to this country.

Part of them came early as settlers, slaves and workers, while the others coming now—came after their unsuccessful revolution of 1865—when they thought they were to be free. The Jew, cursed, maligned, spurned, spat upon, comes to this country for economic, social and political opportunity. He has no home, but becomes an integral part of all countries where money is in circulation. The Negro, too, cursed, maligned, spurned, spat upon, comes to the North and West for economic, social and political opportunity. He has no country, but becomes an integral part of wherever he settles.

I cite these cases to show that migration—whether emigration or immigration—is a legitimate and proper method of improving one’s opportunity: All races have resorted to it. The fact that one crosses water has no bearing on the problem any more than my crossing the river to go to Jersey City to work. It is simply migration—leaving the place where you are to go where you feel you can better your condition. And when these “big Negroes” advise you not to migrate they are ventilating and displaying an ignorance of social laws and history as dismal and inexcusable as their moral courage is spineless and maimed and small.

This migration is the first great blow at lynching, hence the Southern legislatures are interestedly discussing how to stop lynching so as to stop migration of their Negroes. A blow in a man’s pocketbook can do what appeal to principle can never accomplish.

So much for the blow at lynching by the destruction of peonage, through the organization of labor and the actual decreasing of its supply by movement from place to place. But this is only one of the elements in the social compound necessary to remedy the malady. The political pill comes next. How can political force be brought to bear?

To those who are so blatant about the necessity of reforms coming from within there seems to be no star of hope. Because they are met on the threshold of reform with the reply—"The Southern Negro is disfranchised," "He has no vote." "The politician cares only for votes," "How can he make his political power felt—when he really has none?" Superficially considered, the reply is good. It is true the Southern Negro has no effective vote. Politicians are not obligated to him. Quite true.

But what about the Northern and Western Negro? They can vote. Their Congressmen can vote. We Negroes can make lynching an issue. We can question each candidate running on lynching and make him take some position or else knife him at the polls, be he spineless Republican or spineless Democrat.

Moreover, outside influence cannot be underestimated. The Negroes of the South desire lynching to be stopped. The Negroes of the North and West do too. The Negroes of the South cannot help themselves politically even though they can move and help themselves economically. The Negroes of the North and West can vote; they can help themselves politically and they can help their Southern brothers. It is their duty to help them. Every Negro who has come from the South should be preparing to register and qualify for voting. Every West Indian or foreign Negro should be naturalizing to use the sceptre of the citizen—the Ballot. That is how we Negroes in the North and West can help. And it is a big help.

Just as in slavery time, the Southern Negro was in bondage—in slavery—and could not help himself, but on the contrary had to till the fields which made it possible for the Confederate Army to stay on the battlefield and fight to keep the Negro a slave—so the Southern Negro to-day has to produce wealth at starvation wages for those who lynch him. But in slavery time the Negroes of the North and West rose 200,000 strong to help break the shackles of their fellows who were forced to fight against their own freedom! And we Negroes of the North and West must rise one million strong with ballots—not bullets—to crush out the horrible, dastardly and reprehensible disgrace of lynching.

Nor is the principle or policy of outside help new. Douglass was able to arouse public opinion of the North and West when death would have greeted his speech in the South. Douglass was able to arouse opinion in England, when a decent hearing could not be had in Massachusetts. And it was largely through him that the aroused public opinion of England kept that government from recognizing the South, when such recognition would have firmly established the institution of slavery on the American soil. Also on this very question of lynching, it was Miss Ida Wells (Barnett), the colored editor of "Free Speech," published in Memphis, Tenn., who denounced lynching and attempted to organize public opinion abroad against it. The South became so aroused that numerous laws were passed against lynching, even in South Carolina and Alabama, and her paper was suppressed in Tennessee. If foreign criticism is so effective, how much more effective must be ballots, which are not foreign at all, but simply in another section of the country!

We next come to the social remedies for lynching. Chief among these are education, better living, such as housing, work, etc., and religious influences. But how is a Negro going to get the education? Well since he is demanding better schools for his children, if he is to remain in the South, the South is going to give him better schools to keep him there. If he gets more political power, he will

vote himself the schools or compel his representatives to do it, just as he did immediately after the Civil War, when he secured political power and introduced the first free public school system the South ever had. Education of Negroes and whites is a solvent key, for prejudice is born of ignorance and blind hate.

Next, better living, housing, etc., will follow his increased wages, and increased wages will follow his increased education. It is seldom that we see a Negro of respectable attainments and living lynched. It is the Negro who unfortunately receives starvation wages, who is ignorant, who has lost ambition, and who consequently is too often thrown into the bar rooms, the gambling dens and those cesspools of corruption and ruin, the sight of which would make blood rush to the face and tears to the eyes of any one who has the slightest regard for purity and rightness of principle. That is no justification for lynching the Negro, but the provocations are multiplied for so doing.

Lastly, religious influence. If the Negro ministers were not generally so spineless, if they had any foresight or even much hind-sight, being largely the leaders of the people, they could be of a tremendous influence in raising the social position of the masses. In the church education and information could, as it should be given out, in the place of the repetition of these dead creeds and spurious Bible verses. More punch and less prayer, more information and less inspiration, more culture and less creed, more sense and less sermon, more good and less God, more life talk and less death talk, more this world and less the other world would directly redound to the interest of the people. Lynching could be brought prominently to view of white and colored through the pulpit. And the colored pulpits might influence the white pulpit to take up the cudgel. It makes little difference whether the white pulpit even opposed the abolition of lynching (which it hardly would). The discussion of a thing tends to put people to thinking about it. And views are exchanged which tend to sift and clarify themselves--finally and surely arriving at just conclusions.

There are some things, of course, which will not remedy or help to remedy lynching. Among these is the mere piteous appeal. There are, to be sure, two forms of appeal which are useful--both of which are argumentative. Just as it was not possible to abolish slavery until a large number of white people were interested and affected by it, so it will not be possible to abolish lynching until the support of a large number of whites is secured.

For instance, that which had most weight with the white man in slavery days was that no white man could get a decent job with a decent wage while Negroes worked free; just as unpaid convict labor to-day tends to destroy the possibility of labor's competition. So to-day so long as Negroes are in peonage it keeps the wages of white men down, because the problem of slavery is really the issue again. The white man can then be relied upon to help remove peonage and its consequent lynching.

This kind of appeal has no sentiment in it. It is direct and straight to one's personal interest. Abstract altruism is unknown. We only help others because we are thereby benefited ourselves. And that is the only reliable appeal.

There is another appeal to future possibilities and chance which has weight. The entire system of religion is built upon fear of future harm and hope of future benefit, and religion is deep in most men. Here then we can call attention to the danger of the spread of lynching--its portent. The Negro was indifferent to lynching when nearly 800 white men were lynched. That was because he

did not see that even though lynching affected only one race to-day, it would affect another to-morrow. Then lynching spread to Negroes as victims and gradually diminished in its effect upon whites. The pendulum is swinging again, and ten or twelve whites are being lynched a year now. You can show the white man the imminent possibility of its spread and secure his interest now. For just as the Negro is unsafe while the white man across the street has yellow fever, so the Negro with tuberculosis to-day may transmit one of the impartial tubercular baccilli to the white man to-morrow. Disease germs know no color line. Neither do crime germs. And the Negro lynched to-day may be the white man lynched to-morrow. This is sound argument and all men will give it an ear. But most people are not disturbed, even though a man is burned alive, so long as they feel secure from such torture.

And while lynching cannot be affected by piteous appeal, neither can it be affected by violence. Violence seldom accomplishes permanent and desired results. Herein lies the futility of war. The French Revolution achieved nothing for the French people until the Reign of Terror passed and cool, constructive work was done. The French government failed as lamentably in their attempts to force liberalism upon the people through violence as did the Spanish in their attempt to force homogeneity of religious opinion upon the people through the Inquisition. Both Protestantism and Catholicism failed with violence and produced only atheists and agnostics by their efforts. Labor unions, too, have never succeeded in anything else except alienating sympathizers by violence. The human mind naturally resists all attempts to control it by violence. It requires argument, reason and persuasion—its natural food, just as the lungs require air and the stomach protein, fats and carbohydrates.

It might be interesting to inquire into the motives of these violence advisers. They belong to two classes. One is the honest class which, disgusted with lynching, bitter with hatred and heated with hectic hostility, despaired and ignorant of all remedy, while hasty (rightly) for a remedy, advises violence.

Then there is another class, which likes to appear brave, daring, bold, for popular consumption. Some say, "Get bombs, nitro-glycerine, torch and guns." Some do not describe the method, but like Dr. Du Bois in an editorial in *The Crisis* of last October advise at long range, "The Negroes should have prevented that lynching, if they had killed every white man in the county and themselves been killed." That is the talk here. But Dr. DuBois was in the South once teaching in one of the most lynching-disgraced sections of the country—Atlanta, Ga. Moreover, twice as many Negroes were being lynched then as now. We do not recall at this time his having ever led an anti-lynching mob, nor do we recall his giving out such advice at the time, even though the lynching was more extensive, and especially in his own city of Atlanta.

Judged in the light of reason, history and sound policy, such advice would not seem to emanate from a sane mind—not to mention a sincere heart. It is fortunate that the weight of such advice is always weighed by a safe instinct for safety by those who would suffer the evil consequences.

Again, lynchings will not be affected by mass meetings and public demonstrations of parades, though these may be organized effectively. If adequately designed, not merely to denounce, but to stimulate registration and the organization of votes for definite political action—such mass meetings and parades are of service. Otherwise they are forgotten in a few days, to say the least.

We fear too that a large delegation at the White House will not be effective. A large delegation of voters, standing back home with votes behind a small delegation of men with the intelligence, courage and character to present the case, will be far more effective. Use the money to be spent in the transportation of the large delegation for the dissemination of sound political and social information.

We are often told that a Negro is lynched for the usual crime, i. e., rape. If that were true it would be logical for leaders to address their attention to the abolition of rape as the cause of lynching, in order that lynching might be abolished as the consequence. For good or ill, however, rape is not the only cause of lynching. Dr. James Cutler of Yale, in his book on "Lynching," says that "only 34 per cent. of all lynchings have been occasioned by attempted, alleged or actually committed rape." So that even if it were true that raping was the cause of lynchings it would account for only 34 per cent. of them, and we would be still laden with 66 per cent. of the injustice and disgrace.

But just as economic, political and social reform cannot be left entirely unaided in other fields, they cannot be left alone to do their work in the abolition of lynching. To reach a field so broad and extensive, the arm of the law is needed. We are not sufficiently near the millenium to trust all men to do the right thing. Unfortunately some still have to be restrained and others punished.

It may rightly be said that we have a plenty of law now. What is needed is law enforcement—honest administration of the law. The states have laws against murder, homicide, manslaughter and conspiracy, sufficient to send to the chair or gallows every lyncher. Communities may be sued under the laws of most of the Southern and Western States. Indiana, Ohio, Alabama, South Carolina and Mississippi have laws which give the legal representatives of the lynched victim power and right to sue the county or city for large sums of money; in most cases not less than \$1,000 or \$2,000 and not more than \$10,000, in some cases. Negro families have recovered as high as \$5,000 and been paid in South Carolina.

Then, too, there are laws which would remove the sheriff if a prisoner is lynched—without regard to his negligence or responsibility. The legal representatives of the lynched victim, in some states, may recover from the county where the victim was in custody, and that county may recover from another county into which the victim may be carried off and lynched. This is done to stop evasion and fraud.

The much talked of Federal law against lynching is of some value, but the loopholes have seldom been discussed by the Negroes, at least, who so glibly talk about it with an air of cocksureness. The Federal law is especially thought of as a higher and more honestly administered law; and that is true. But either in Federal or State jurisdictions, the prejudiced communities will sit as jurors.

No, say the amateurs. We shall have change of venue. But change of venue, it must be remembered, will not be so favorably considered by the authorities, because that is a recourse usually taken by the defendant for his advantage, namely, in order that he, the defendant, may get a fair and impartial trial. In the proposed cases the lynchers, not the lynched, will be the defendants. Therefore, the plaintiffs would be asking a change of venue because of the greater probability of convicting the defendant. The courts would not be inclined to give ear to this plea.

But even if overriding the blandishments of local prejudice, venue should be granted, unless well stipulated—and rather exceptionally too—the change would be futile. For the general group of lynch-law states is so situated en bloc that the sentiment is sympathetic—about the same. And to try a man in Georgia for lynching a Negro in Florida would be merely beating the winds.

Nevertheless, exceptional cases often require exceptional remedies, and I favor the government's prescribing such remedies.

I favor a Federal law against lynching.

Its penalty ought to be very drastic.

It ought to remove automatically any sheriff whose prisoner is taken from him—without regard to his negligence or good faith. (This will remove all inducement for fraud and collusion.)

It ought to bond the sheriff, with a provision therein that the bond is to go automatically to the victim's legal representatives upon the lynching of such individual.

The County or City should be liable to the legal representatives for damages automatically, without regard to negligence or intent. The policy of dispensing with intent or negligence is not new to the law, but is adopted in many cases because it tends to make every citizen interested in the enforcement of the law. It makes every citizen interested in the enforcement of right living on the part of his fellows, when each citizen suffers by his fellow citizen's breach of good faith.

In order to check this lionizing of such negligent sheriffs, the law should make them ineligible for re-election to such office.

If the prisoner is taken out of custody in one county and lynched in another, the legal representatives should be indemnified by the county where the prisoner was in custody, and the county from which the prisoner was taken should recover from the county in which the prisoner was lynched.

Now the objects of both civil and criminal law are (1) to repair damages, (2) to deter from committing damages, and (3) to punish for violations of the law.

All three methods are effective.

Punitive measures are needed to override the present daring defiance of, and contempt for, the law. If a few lynchers were executed, I venture to say that this gentle chivalry of the United States would become very unpopular.

Deterrent effects would follow the certainty of the law's strong arm. As all criminologists know, certainty of punishment is a greater deterrent than severity—and more desirable too. Make the way of the transgressors hard and the arm of the law certain and strong, and you deal lynching a death blow.

And, finally, when the taxpayers have to pay for these lynchings, they are going to stop the source of the expense. When the bonding companies give bond, they are going to protect their bonds. The counties don't want to pay out five or ten thousand dollars. The sheriff wants his position—his job. He needs the money. And, remember, that it is not cowardice, or

inability of the sheriffs to prevent lynchings that cause their prisoners to be taken from them. Not at all. It is simply their sympathy with the mob. But sympathy goes a-flying when the sheriff has to pay \$5,000 for sympathy. He always sympathizes with his pocket-book most.

Lynching must go. It is going. It is growing less. But we shall not cease to cry out against it until it is all gone. So long as there is a germ left, the body of our republic is not safe. No one within it is safe. It is the Negro to-day. It is the white man to-morrow. It is John Jones, a Negro, this week; it is Leo Frank, a Jew—and a rich Jew—next week. It is for rape to-day; it is for talking impudent to-morrow.

It has wormed its wicked way into the heart of America and it is eating out her very soul. It is bolstered up by race prejudice. It is fostered by poverty. It is augmented by ignorance. It is entrenched in peonage and wage-slavery. It is made prolific by disfranchisement. Segregation and discrimination fan the flame.

Let all of America's good citizens—men and women—white and black—join in making this a land of common justice for our common country. A clean and thorough system of education to white and black boys and girls must be given. This is our duty. Race prejudice must be relegated. It is our national sin. Peonage must be replaced by an honest wage and wholesome living. All of us benefit by this. Rich and poor, high and low, black and white, must be accorded the right to select those who govern them and participation in the making of the laws by which they are to be governed. This is simple justice. Segregation and disfranchisement must be driven to the tall timbers and that obscurity and oblivion from which they ought never to emerge. Honest, fearless, courageous and intelligent Negro leaders must yet come, who, while free from bluster and brag, will coolly and seriously address themselves to the task of national and racial reconstruction.

The task is big. The men are few. The service requires a good bit of sacrifice—a fund of intelligence and courage. Our present leaders have failed miserably. The New Negro now offers his services to the nation in the solution of this great problem—the accomplishment of which is at once fraught with bigness and consequence. It is a service as much to the white man as it is to the Negro. Let no man fail in the performance of his full duty until this sublime and “devoutly-to-be-wished” achievement is attained in full!

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