



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

Pamphlet: The Negro Worker Vol.4 No. 4

Extracted on Apr-24-2024 07:00:57

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Negroes Speak of War.
BY LANGSTON HUGHES

When the time comes for the next war, I'm asking you, remember the last war. I'm asking you, what you fought for, and what you would be fighting for again? I'm asking, how many of the lies you were told do you still believe? Does any Negro believe, for instance, that the world was actually saved for democracy? Does any Negro believe, any more, in closing ranks with the war makers? Maybe a few soldiers believed Dr. Moton when he came over to France talking about <<Be nice and fight for the nice white folks>>. Be meek and shoot some Germans. But do any Negroes believe him now, with lynched black workers hanging on trees all around Tuskegee? I'm asking you?

And after the Chicago riots and the Washington riots and the East St. Louis riots, and more recently the Bonus March, is it some foreign army needs to be fought?

And listen, I'm asking you, with all the war ships and marines and officers and Secretary of the Navy going to Cuba, can't they send even one sergeant after Shamblin in Alabama?

And with all the money they got to buy bombing planes, why in the hell can't they pay the teachers for my kids to go to school?

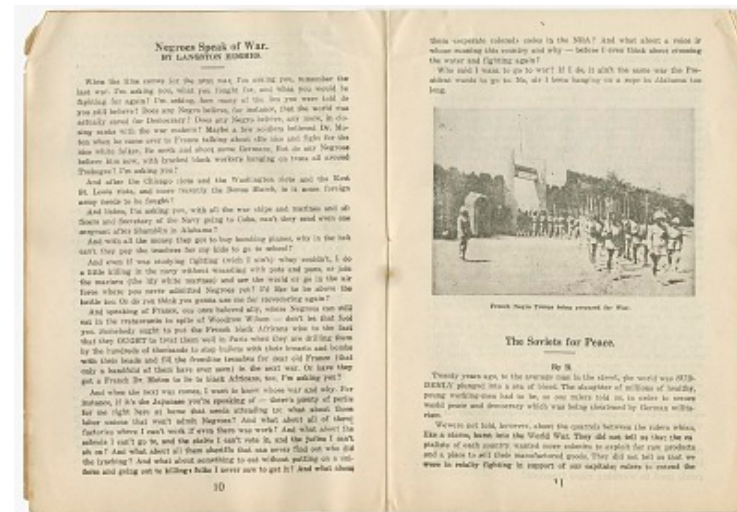
And even if was studying fighting (which I ain't) why couldn't, I do a little killing in the Navy without wrestling with pots and pans, or join the marines (the lily white marines) and see the world or go in the air force where you never admitted Negroes yet? I'd like to be above the battle too. Or do you think you gonna use me for stevedoring again?

And speaking of France, our once beloved ally, where Negroes can still eat in the restaurants in spite of Woodrow Wilson -- don't let that fool you. Somebody ought to put the French black Africans wise to the fact that they OUGHT to treat them well in Paris when they are drilling them by the hundreds of thousands to stop bullets with their breasts and bombs with their heads and fill the frontline trenches for dear old France (that only a handful of them have ever seen) in the next war. Or have they got a French Dr. Moton to lie to black Africans, too. I'm asking you?

And when the next war comes, I want to know whose war and why. For instance, if it's the Japanese you're speaking of -- there's plenty of perils for me right here at home that needs attending to: what about those labor unions that won't admit Negroes? And what about all of those factories where I can't work if even there was work? And what about the schools I can't go to, and the states I can't vote in, and the juries I can't sit on? And what about all those sheriffs that can never find out who did the lynching? And what about something to eat without putting on a uniform and going out to killing folks I never saw to get it? And what about

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them <<seperate colored>> codes in the NRA? And what about a voice in whose running this country and why -- before I even think about crossing the water and fighting again?



Who said I want to go to war? If I do, it ain't the same war the President wants to go to. No, sir I been hanging on a rope in Alabama too long.

[[image]]

French Negro Troops being prepared for War.

The Soviets for Peace.

By B.

Twenty years ago, to the average man in the street, the world was SUDDENLY plunged into a sea of blood. The slaughter of millions of healthy, young working-men had to be, so our rulers told us, in order to secure world peace and democracy which was being threatened by German militarism.

Wewere [[we were]] not told, however, about the quarrels between the rulers which, like a storm, burst into the World War. They did not tell us that the capitalists of each country wanted more colonies to exploit for raw products and a place to sell their manufactured goods. They did not tell us that we were in reialty [[reality]] fighting in support of our capitalist rulers to extend the

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