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National Museum of African American History and Culture

Pamphlet: Jim-Crow in Uniform

Extracted on Mar-28-2024 09:22:45

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Representation Is Tyranny"; "America Has Lynched Without Trial 2,876 Negroes in 31 Years and Not a Single Murderer Has Suffered"; "Put the Spirit of Christ in the Making and Execution of the Laws."

Further evidence of anti-war sentiments among the Negro people is unwittingly brought out in letter written to George Creel, chairman of Committee on Public Information in Washington, by Trumbull White, of the Investors' Public Service in New York, informing him that:

"... The Big Negro colony in Harlem is badly infected with a series of rumors arousing great distress and disquiet....The rumors are of various kinds....One is that the Negro regiments are being terribly abused by their white officers. Another is that the Negro regiments are being discriminated against in the distribution of troops where the danger and suffering will be the greatest....Another is that already more than 200 Negro soldiers with eyes gouged out and arms cut off, after having been captured by Germans and then turned loose by them to wander back to the American lines have been sent home to this country and are now in the Columbia Base Hospital, No. 1, in the Bronx...."

He concludes his letter by making two recommendations. One, that a permit be arranged for a Negro preacher, doctor, and "intelligent" Negro woman from Harlem be sent to the hospital for complete inspection. And the others that preferably, Irvin Cobb, lecturer in Harlem on the subject of Negro troops in France since "Cobb has the Southern affectation for the Negro and could do the thing right."

It was obvious that things were not right either at home or in France and the Negroes were answering back with protest and signs of discontent.

Other outstanding examples of anti-war sentiment would include the work of William Monroe Trotter, progressive Negro editor of the Boston Guardian who, during the war, fought in his columns against America's participation in the war and the treatment of Negroes. Among the outstanding

* "The American Negro in the War," by Emmett J. Scott.

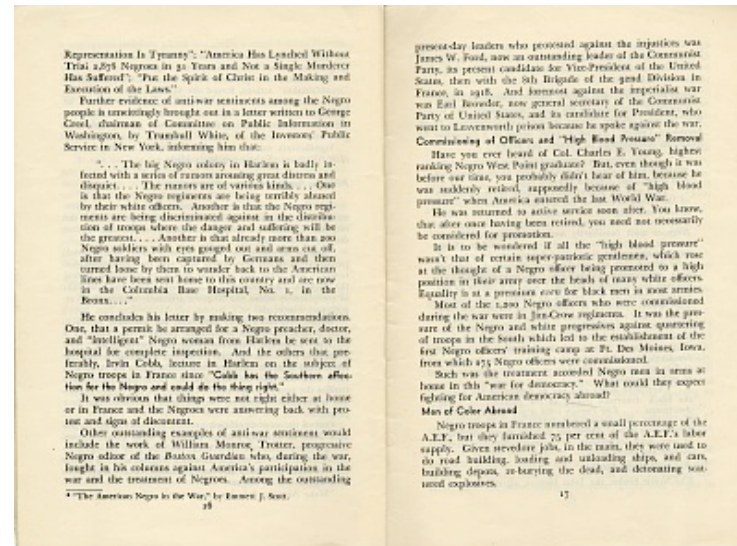
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present-day leaders who protested against the injustices was James W. Ford, now an outstanding leader of the Communist Party, its present candidate for Vice-President of the United States, then with the 8th Brigade of the 92nd Division in France, in 1918. And foremost against the imperialist war was Earl Browder, now general secretary of the Communist Party of United States, and its candidate for President, who went to Leavenworth prison because he spoke against the war.

Commissioning of Officers and "High Blood Pressure" Removal

Have you ever heard of Col. Charles E. Young, highest ranking Negro West Point graduate? But, even though it was before our time, you



probably didn't hear of him, because he was suddenly retired, supposedly because of "high blood pressure" when America entered the last World War.

He was returned to active service soon after. You know, that after once having been retired, you need not necessarily be considered for promotion.

It is to be wondered if all the "high blood pressure" wasn't that of certain super-patriotic gentlemen, which rose at the thought of a Negro officer being promoted to a high position in their army over the heads of many white officers. Equality is at a premium even for black men in most armies.

Most of the 1,200 Negro officers who were commissioned during the war were in Jim-Crow regiments. It was the pressure of the Negro and white progressives against quartering of troops in the South which led to the establishment of the first Negro officers' training camp at Ft. Des Moines, Iowa, from which 275 Negro officers were commissioned.

Such was the treatment accorded Negro men in arms at home in this "war for democracy." What could they expect fighting for American democracy abroad?

Men of Color Abroad

Negro troops in France Numbered a small percentage of the A.E.F., but they furnished 75 per cent of the A.E.F.'s labor supply. Given stevedore jobs, in the main, they were used to do road building, loading and unloading ships, and cars, building depots, reburying the dead, and detonating scattered explosives.

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