



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

Pamphlet: Jim-Crow in Uniform

Extracted on Apr-19-2024 05:34:20

The Smithsonian Institution thanks all digital volunteers that transcribed and reviewed this material. Your work enriches Smithsonian collections, making them available to anyone with an interest in using them.

The Smithsonian Institution (the "Smithsonian") provides the content on this website (transcription.si.edu), other Smithsonian websites, and third-party sites on which it maintains a presence ("SI Websites") in support of its mission for the "increase and diffusion of knowledge." The Smithsonian invites visitors to use its online content for personal, educational and other non-commercial purposes. By using this website, you accept and agree to abide by the [following terms](#).

- If sharing the material in personal and educational contexts, please cite the National Museum of African American History and Culture as source of the content and the project title as provided at the top of the document. Include the accession number or collection name; when possible, link to the National Museum of African American History and Culture website.
- If you wish to use this material in a for-profit publication, exhibition, or online project, please contact National Museum of African American History and Culture or transcribe@si.edu

For more information on this project and related material, contact the National Museum of African American History and Culture. [See this project](#) and other collections in the Smithsonian Transcription Center.

The Negro troops who fought, however, were outstanding. The 8th Illinois (part of the 92nd Division), officered by Negroes, received more citations and Croix de Guerres than any other regiment in France.

"Secret Information" and Slander Against Negroes in France

Carter G. Woodson, in his book "Negroes In the World War" exposes certain "Secret Information Concerning Black American Troops," August 7, 1918 issued in a document by American reactionaries in France. He writes:

... The Negroes were branded as a menace of degeneracy which could be escaped only by an impassable gulf established between the two races.

"This was an urgent need because of the tendency of the blacks to commit loathsome crime of assault, as they said Negroes had already been doing in France. The French was therefore cautioned not to treat the Negroes with familiarity and indulgence, which are matters of grievous concern to Americans and an affront to their national policy. The Americans, it continued, were afraid that the blacks might thereby be inspired with undesirable aspirations. It was carefully explained that although the black man is a citizen of the United States, he is regarded by whites as an inferior with whom relations of business and service only are possible; and that the black is noted for his want of intelligence, lack of discretion, and lack of civic and professional conscience. The French army was then advised to prevent intimacy between French officers and black officers, not to eat with them nor shake hands nor seek to talk or meet with them outside the requirements of military service.

"They were asked also not to commend too highly the black American troops in the presence of white Americans...The French were urged also to restrain the native cantonment population from spoiling the Negroes, as white Americans become greatly incensed at any deep expression of intimacy between white women and black men."

The Returned Negro Soldier

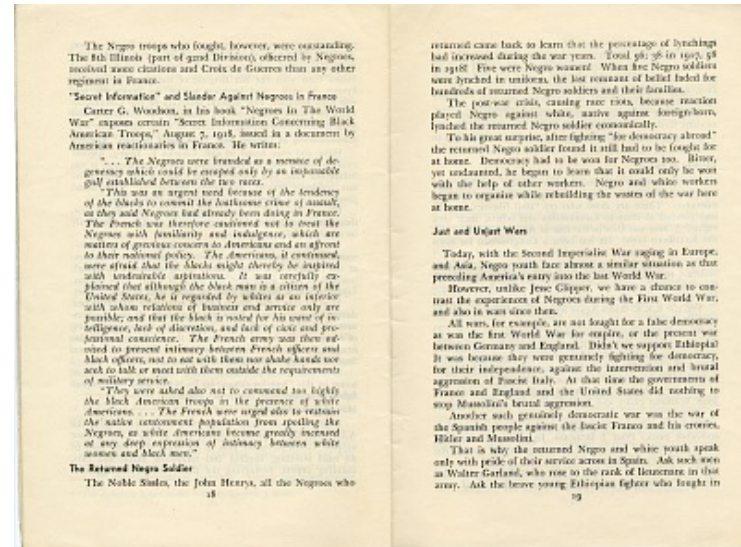
The Noble Sissles, the John Henrys, all the Negroes who

18

[[end page]]
[[start page]]

returned came back to learn that the percentage of lynchings had increased during the war years. Total 96; 38 in 1917, 58 in 1918! Five were Negro women! When five Negro soldiers were lynched in uniform, the last remnant of belief faded for hundreds of returned Negro soldiers and their families.

The post-war crisis, causing race riots, because reaction played Negro against white, native against foreign-born, lynched the returned Negro soldier economically.



To his great surprise, after fighting "for democracy abroad" the returned Negro soldier found it still had to be fought for at home. Democracy had to be won for the Negroes too. Bitter, yet undaunted, he began to learn that it could only be won with the help of other workers. Negro and white workers began to organize while rebuilding the wastes of the war here at home.

Just and Unjust Wars

Today, with the Second Imperialist War raging in Europe, and Asia, Negro youth face almost a similar situation as that preceding America's entry into the last World War.

However, unlike Jesse Clipper, we have a chance to contrast the experiences of Negroes during the First World War, and also in wars since then.

All wars, for example, are not fought for a false democracy as was the first World War for empire, or the present war between Germany and England. Didn't we support Ethiopia? It was because they were genuinely fighting for democracy, for their independence, against the intervention and brutal aggression of Fascist Italy. At that time the governments of France and England and the United States did nothing to stop Mussolini's brutal aggression.

Another such genuinely democratic war was the war of the Spanish people against the fascist Franco and his cronies, Hitler and Mussolini.

That is why the returned Negro and white youth speak only with pride of their service across Spain. Ask such men as Walter Garland, who rose to the rank of lieutenant in that army. Ask the brave young Ethiopian fighter who fought in



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

The mission of the Smithsonian is the increase and diffusion of knowledge - shaping the future by preserving our heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing our resources with the world. Founded in 1846, the Smithsonian is the world's largest museum and research complex, consisting of 19 museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park, and nine research facilities. Become an active part of our mission through the Transcription Center. Together, we are discovering secrets hidden deep inside our collections that illuminate our history and our world.

Join us!

The Transcription Center: <https://transcription.si.edu>

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SmithsonianTranscriptionCenter>

On Twitter: [@TranscribeSI](https://twitter.com/TranscribeSI)

Connect with the Smithsonian

Smithsonian Institution: www.si.edu

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Smithsonian>

On Twitter: [@smithsonian](https://twitter.com/smithsonian)