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National Museum of African American History and Culture

Pamphlet: Old Jim Crow Has To Go!

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the policy of Wall Street Jim-Crowism. In the face of threatened recrimination, fifteen Negro seamen aboard the "U.S.S. Philadelphia," who have been compelled to act as messmen for their white officers, wrote a letter to The Pittsburgh Courier outlining the discrimination practiced against them. As a result, a number of these sailors were dishonorably discharged from the Navy. Their courageous example is not an isolated one. Only recently another group of Negro seamen aboard the "U.S.S. Davis" threw a public light upon the discrimination practiced against them. Raising their voices in protest they declared:

"We have battle stations like everyone else. We fight shoulder to shoulder with our white shipmates. If they die, we die, so why are we segregated in our work?... Before now we were afraid of the consequences if we sought to reveal discrimination, but now that we have outside help, which has given us new hope, we re prepared and determined to do our part on the inside to the last man. We appreciate the splendid work being done in our defense."

This action not only shows courage, but courage which is based on faith and reliance on the masses. This is the way to break down Jim-Crow practices. As the fight for equality develops among Negro youth, increasing numbers of white youth join the fight. They are beginning to take it as their very own. Negro youth do not fight alone. They are locking hands with white youth, as expressed in the recent Town Meeting held in Washington, sponsored by the American Youth Congress, which represented some 4,000,000 organized youth in the country. Protesting this discrimination, the Youth Congress organized delegations of Negro and white who lobbied in Washington, reaching most of the Senators and Representatives. Two hundred youth with placards picketed the War Department demanding that "Old Jim Crow Has Got to Go!" This picket line was led by white young Southerners from the heart of the "solid South."

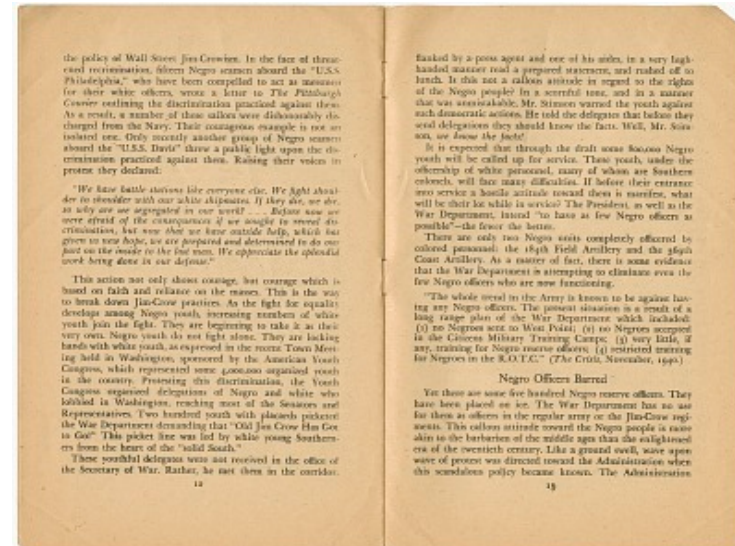
These youthful delegates were not received in the office of the Secretary of War. Rather, he met them in the corridor,

12

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[[start page]]

flanked by a press agent and one of his aides, in a very high-handed manner read a prepared statement and rushed off to lunch. Is this not a callous attitude in regard to the rights of the Negro people? In a scornful tone, and in a manner that was unmistakable, Mr. Stimson warned the youth against such democratic actions. He told the delegates that before they send delegations they should know the facts. Well, Mr. Stimson, we know the facts!

It is expected that through the draft some 800,000 Negro youth will be called up for service. These youth, under the officership of white personnel, many of whom are Southern colonels, will face many difficulties. If before their entrance into service a hostile attitude toward them is manifest, what will be their lot while in service? The President, as well as the War Department, intend "to have as few Negro officers as possible"—the fewer the better.



There are only two Negro units completely officered by colored personnel: the 184th Field Artillery and the 369th Coast Artillery. As a matter of fact, there is some evidence that the War Department is attempting to eliminate even the few Negro officers who are now functioning.

"The whole trend in the Army is known to be against having any Negro officers. The present situation is a result of a long range plan of the War Department which included: (1) no Negroes sent to West Point; (2) no Negroes accepted in the Citizen Military Training Camps; (3) very little, if any, training for Negro reserve officers; (4) restricted training for Negroes in the R.O.T.C." (The Crisis, November, 1940)

Negro Officers Barred

Yet there are some 500 Negro reserve officers. They have been placed on ice. The War Department has no use for them as officers in the regular army of the Jim-Crow regiments. This callous attitude toward the Negro people is more akin to the barbarism of the middle ages than the enlightened era of the twentieth century. Like a ground swell, wave upon wave of protest was directed toward the Administration when this scandalous policy became known. The Administration



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