## 1. German Pamphlet, To the Colored Soldiers of the US Army (1917)

This pamphlet was dropped from planes to members of the 92nd and 93rd Infantry Divisions. It was re-reprinted in *The Crisis* XVII (March 1919), p. 222.

“To the colored soldiers of the U.S. Army.

Hallo boys, what are you doing over here? Fighting the Germans? Why? Have they ever done you any harm? Of course, some white folks and the lying English-American press told you that the Germans ought to be wiped out for the sake of humanity and democracy. What is Democracy? Personal Freedom, all citizens enjoying the same rights socially and before the law! Do you enjoy the same rights as white people do in America. the land of Freedom and Democracy? Or aren’t you rather treated over there as second class citizens? Can you go into a rest urant where white people dine, can you get a seat in a theater where white people sit, can you get a Pullman seat or berth in a rail roadcar or can you even ride, in the South, in the same street car with white people? And how about the law? Is lynching and the most horrible cruelties connected therewith a lawful proceeding in a democratic country?

Now, all this is entirely different in Germany, where they do like colored people, where they treat them as Gentlemen and not as second class citizens. They enjoy exactly the same social privileges as every white man, and quite a number of colored people have mighty fine positions in business in Berlin and other big German cities.



Why then fight the Germans only for the benefit of the Wall-street robbers to protect the millions they have lent to the English, French, and Italians? You have been made the tool of the egotistic and rapacious rich in England and America. and there is nothing in the whole game for you but broken bones, horrible wounds, spoiled health or—death. No satisfaction whatsoever will you get out of this unjust war. You have never seen Germany, so you are fools if you allow people to teach you to hate it. Come over to see for yourself. Let those do the fighting who make profit out of this war; don’t allow them to use you as cannon food. To carry the gun in their defence is not an honor but a shame. Throw it away and come over to the German lines. You will find friends who will help you along.”

Image from US National Archives

## 2. French Army Internal Memo, “Secret Information Concerning Black American Troops” (7 August 1918)

Text from the Yale MacMillan Center: <https://glc.yale.edu/french-directive>

The following French directive was published without comment in *The Crisis* as“A French Directive,” *The Crisis*, XVIII (May, 1919), p. 16-18.

“[To the] French Military Mission. stationed with the American Army. August 7, 1918. Secret information concerning the Black American Troops.

1. It is important for French officers who have been called upon to exercise command over black American troops, or to live in close contact with them, to have an exact idea of the position occupied by Negroes in the United States. The information set forth in the following communication ought to be given to these officers and it is to their interest to have these matters known and widely. disseminated. It will devolve likewise on the French Military Authorities, through the medium of the Civil Authorities, to give information on this subject to the French population residing in the cantonments occupied by American colored troops.

2. The American attitude upon the Negro question may seem a matter for discussion to many French minds. But we French are not in our province if we undertake to discuss what some call “prejudice.” [recognize that] American opinion is unanimous on the “color question,” and does not admit of any discussion.

The increasing number of Negroes in the United States (about 15,000,000) would create for the white race in the Republic a menace of degeneracy were it not that an impassable gulf has been made between them.

As this danger does not exist for the French race, the French public has become accustomed to treating the Negro with familiarity and indulgence.

This indulgence and this familiarity [These] are matters of grievous concern to the Americans. They consider them an affront to their national policy. They are afraid that contact with the French will inspire in black Americans aspirations which to them (the whites) appear intolerable. It is of the utmost importance that every effort be made to avoid profoundly estranging American opinion.

Although a citizen of the United States, the black man is regarded by the white American as an inferior being with whom relations of business or service only are possible. The black is constantly being censured for his want of intelligence and discretion, his lack of civic and professional conscience, and for his tendency toward undue familiarity.

The vices of the Negro are a constant menace to the American who has to repress them sternly. For instance, the black American troops in France have, by themselves, given rise to as many complaints for attempted rape as all the rest of the army. And yet the (black American) soldiers sent us have been the choicest with respect to physique and morals, for the number disqualified at the time of mobilization was enormous.

Conclusion

1. We must prevent the rise of any pronounced degree of intimacy between French officers and black officers. We may be courteous and amiable with these last, but we cannot deal with them on the same plane as with the white American officers without deeply wounding the latter. We must not eat with [the blacks] them, must not shake hands or seek to talk or meet with them outside of the requirements of military service.

2. We must not commend too highly the black American troops, particularly in the presence of (white) Americans. It is all right to recognize their good qualities and their services, but only in moderate terms strictly in keeping with the truth.

3. Make a point of keeping the native cantonment population from “spoiling” the Negroes. (White) Americans become greatly incensed at any public expression of intimacy between white women with black men. They have recently uttered violent protests against a picture in the “Vie Parisienne” entitled “The Child of the Desert” which shows a (white) woman in a “cabinet particulier” with a Negro. Familiarity on the part of white women with black men is furthermore a source of profound regret to our experienced colonials who see in it an overweening menace to the prestige of the white race.

Military authority cannot intervene directly in this question, but it can through the civil authorities exercise some influence on the population.

[Signed] LINARD

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