

A BLACK MAN REPLIES.

Dear Editor: The following letter, replying to E. D. Morel's article on the black troops in Germany, was sent to the *Daily Herald* on April 11th, but apparently the *Herald* refuses a hearing to the other side, which is quite inarticulate:—
The Editor of the *Daily Herald*.

Sir: The odiousness of your article headlined "Black Scourge in Europe; Sexual Horror let loose" is not mitigated by your explanatory editorial and note stating that you are not encouraging race prejudice and that you champion native rights in Africa. If you are really consistent in thinking that you can do something to help the white and black peoples to a better understanding of each other, there is much that you might learn, from Liberal and Conservative organs like *The Nation*, *The New Statesman* and the *Edinburgh Review*, which have treated the problem (exposing the iniquities practised upon the natives and showing up the shortcomings of the latter) in a decent and dignified manner.

Your correspondent, who peddles his books and articles on "the poor, suffering black," is quite worked up over the African warriors carrying off prizes of war like the heads and eyes of their victims. But, verily, trophies of war are trophies of war, whether they are human works of art like paintings and sculpture, or nature's like man's hands and heads. I am quite ignorant of the "well-known physiological reasons that make the raping of a white woman by a negro resultful of serious and fatal injury." Any violent act of rape, whether by white, yellow or black, civilised or savage man, must entail injury, serious or fatal, especially if the victim be a virgin. The worst case of rape I ever heard of took place in Kansas City some eight years ago; the woman was white, the perpetrators three white men, and the result was well-nigh fatal. In the West Indies there have been many instances of white soldiers raping coloured women with awful consequences. Your correspondent employs the same methods used by the German propagandists during the War without any real effect. England, France, even America, all used their black troops in the War. Surely the *Daily Herald*, by the light of experience, ought to find a more effective and honest way of combating a grave evil.

Why all this obscene, maniacal outburst about the sex vitality of black men in a proletarian paper? You might say the negro is oversexed; the same statement may be made of the Italians and Jews of the Caucasian race. To say that the black man is "sexually unrestrainable" is palpably false. I, a full-blooded negro, can control my sexual proclivities when I care to, and I am endowed with my full share of the primitive passion. Besides, I know of hundreds of negroes of the Americas and Africa who can do likewise. When white men go among coloured races they do not take their women with them; hence the hundreds of mulattos, octo-rooms and eurasians disowned of the Caucasian race.

During my stay in Europe, I have come in contact with many weak and lascivious persons of both sexes, but I do not argue from my experience that the English race is degenerate. On the other hand, I have known some of the finest and cleanest types of men and women among the Anglo-Saxons.

If the black troops are syphilitic, they have been contaminated by the white world. According to competent white investigators, syphilis is a disease peculiar to white and yellow peoples; where it is known among the blacks it has been carried thither by the whites. Houses of prostitution have always been maintained, officially or otherwise, for soldiers. They were a notorious fact during the late War. I think the key to your exposure may be found in your excerpt from *Clarke*, which states that "German girls of barely marriageable age sell themselves because 20 francs are worth 150 marks, and 50 francs 400 marks." In this intolerable age the great majority of peoples, male and female, in different ways, is more or less given to prostitution. The stopping of French exploitation and use of the North African conscripts (not mercenaries, as your well-informed correspondent insists they are) against the Germans is clearly a matter upon which the French Socialists should take united action. But not as you have done.

I do not protest because I happen to be a negro (I am disgusted when I read in your columns that the white dockers would prohibit their employers using Chinese and Indian labour), I write because I feel that the ultimate result of your propaganda will be further strife and blood-spilling between the whites and the many members of my race, boycotted economically and socially, who have been dumped down on the English docks since the ending of the European War. I have been told in Limehouse by white men, who ought to know, that this summer will see a recrudescence of the outbreaks that occurred last year. The negro-baiting Bourbons of the United States will thank you, and the proletarian underworld of London will certainly gloat over the scoop of the Christian-Socialist-pacifist *Daily Herald*.
Yours etc.,
CLAUDE MCKAY.