



The NEGRO SILENT PROTEST PARADE

organized by the NAACP
Fifth Ave., New York City
July 28, 1917

On the following two pages are digital images of (1) the flyer distributed by the NAACP several days before the 1917 Silent Protest parade, organized to protest lynchings and other violence against blacks, especially the East St. Louis race riot, and (2) an undated memo sent to NAACP branches listing the mottoes used on banners in the parade.

The notes below clarify phrases used in the parade banners.

- **East St. Louis, Illinois race riot of July 1-3, 1917.** After weeks of tension and attacks on blacks, spurred by the use of black workers to replace striking white workers in a plant processing bauxite for the war effort, a white mob set fire to the black section of the city and destroyed it. Black residents were brutally attacked and shot as they tried to flee the fires. The National Guard, called in by the mayor, proved ineffective against the mob violence. At least 39 African Americans were killed, and hundreds more were burned and beaten.
- **Lady MacBeths of East St. Louis.** White women yelled encouragement to the white mob, and some participated in the beatings of black men and women. The *Cleveland Advocate* reported that “*women and children . . . pursued the [black] women who were driven out of the burning homes with the idea, not of extinguishing their burning clothing, but of inflicting added pain, if possible. They stood around in groups, laughing and jeering, while they witnessed the final writhings of the terror and pain [of the] wracked wretches who crawled to the streets to die after their flesh had been cooked in their own homes.*” (21 July 1917)
- **Memphis and Waco.** Widely publicized brutal lynchings had occurred in these cities, in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1917, and in Waco, Texas, in 1916 (the sadistic murder of 17-year-old Jesse Washington).
- **Carrizal.** African American soldiers of the 10th Cavalry — the Buffalo Soldiers — fought under General Pershing in the 1916 incursion into Mexico to capture Pancho Villa. Troops of the Buffalo Soldiers were ambushed at the Battle of Carrizal.
- **Carnegie hero medals.** In 1904 Andrew Carnegie instituted the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission to recognize and award acts of civilian heroism.



NEGRO SILENT PROTEST PARADE

124 WEST 136th STREET, N. Y.

REV. HUTCHENS C. BISHOP, D. D., Prés.

REV. CHAS. D. MARTIN, D. D., Secretary
124 West 136th St., N. Y.

To The People of African Descent:

July 24th, 1917

Dear Friend:

There will be 10,000 Negroes in line at 1 o'clock Saturday, July 28th, on 59th St. and Fifth Ave. to 23rd Street and Madison Square where the procession will end.

WHERE TO ASSEMBLE

The Children of the various Sunday Schools, Public Schools and Families will assemble on 57th St. between 5th and 6th Aves., the WOMEN on 56th St. and MEN on 55th west of Fifth Ave. **We must assemble not later than 12 o'clock.**

ORDER OF MARCH

The Children will lead the parade followed by the Women in white, while the Men will bring up the rear. The laborer, the professional man — all classes of the Race — will march on foot to the beating of muffled drums. The native born, the foreign born, united by the ties of blood and color, all owing allegiance to the Mother of races will parade silently with the flags of America, England, Haiti and Liberia.

YOU MUST BE IN LINE

WHY DO WE MARCH?

We march because by the Grace of God and the force of truth, the dangerous, hampering walls of prejudice and inhuman injustices must fall.

We march because we want to make impossible a repetition of Waco, Memphis and East St. Louis, by rousing the conscience of the country and bring the murderers of our brothers, sisters and innocent children to justice.

We march because we deem it a crime to be silent in the face of such barbaric acts.

We march because we are thoroughly opposed to Jim-crow Cars etc., Segregation, Discrimination, Disfranchisement, LYNCHING and the host of evils that are forced on us. It is time that the Spirit of Christ should be manifested in the making and execution of laws.

We march because we want our children to live in a better land and enjoy fairer conditions than have fallen to our lot.

We march in memory of our butchered dead, the massacre of the honest toilers who were removing the reproach of laziness and thriftlessness hurled at the entire race. They died to prove our worthiness to live. We live in spite of death shadowing us and ours. We prosper in the face of the most unwarranted and illegal oppression.

We march because the growing consciousness and solidarity of race coupled with sorrow and discrimination have made us one: a union that may never be dissolved in spite of shallow-brained agitators, scheming pundits and political tricksters who secure a fleeting popularity and uncertain financial support by promoting the disunion of a people who ought to consider themselves as one.

Be in line on Saturday and show that you have not become callous to the sorrows of your race. May God bless you and every parader.

Yours in righteous indignation,

REV. CHAS. MARTIN, Secy.

MEMORANDUM FOR N. A. A. C. P. BRANCHES

MOTTOES USED IN THE NEGRO SILENT PROTEST PARADE, NEW YORK.

Memphis and Waco—Centers of American Culture?

Make America safe for Democracy.

Taxation without representation is tyranny.

Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal. That they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. That among those are LIFE, LIBERTY and the pursuit of HAPPINESS.

If you are of African descent tear off this corner.

America has lynched without trial 2,867 Negroes in 31 years and not a single murderer has suffered.

200,000 Black men fought for your liberty in the Civil War.

The first blood for American Independence was shed by a Negro—Crispus Attucks.

We have fought for the liberty of white Americans in six wars; our reward is East St. Louis.

12,000 of us fought with Jackson at New Orleans.

We fought with Perry at Lake Erie.

10,000 of us fought in the Spanish-American War.

From Bunker Hill to Carrizal we have done our bit.

The world owes no man a living, but every man an opportunity to earn a living.

We are maligned as lazy, and murdered when we work.

We are excluded from the unions and condemned for not joining them.

Repelled by the unions we are condemned as scabs.

Suffer little children and forbid them not.

Unto the least of these my brethren.

3,000 Negroes fought for American Independence under George Washington.

We helped to plant the flag in every American Dominion.

Thirty-four Negroes have received Carnegie hero medals.

Our music is the only American music.

So treat us that we may love our country.

India is abolishing caste; America is adopting it.

Race prejudice is the offspring of ignorance and the mother of lynching.

If fault is to be found with color, blame God and yourselves.

Patriotism and loyalty presuppose protection and liberty.

We have 1,000,000 farmers.

We have 30,000 carpenters.

We have 30,000 clergymen.

We have 12,000 brick and stone masons.

We have 30,000 teachers.

We have 3,000 physicians.

We own 250,000 farms with 20,000,000 acres of land worth \$500,000,000.

We have Church property worth \$76,000,000.

A square deal for every man.—T. R.

The Negro has never betrayed the flag, attempted to assassinate the President or any official of this government:

We have 60,000 iron and steel workers.

We have 20,000 slaughter and packing house operators.

Your hands are full of blood.

Mothers, do lynchers go to heaven?

The great contradiction—love of God and hatred of man.

Color, blood and suffering have made us one.

Pray for the Lady MacBeths of East St. Louis.